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A VISIT TO MEXICO,

BY

THE WEST INDIA ISLANDS,

YUCATAN AND UNITED STATES,

WITH

Observations and Adventures on the Way,

BY

WM. PARISH ROBERTSON.

AUTHOR OF "LETTERS ON PARAGUAY," ETC.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PART III.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

A VISIT TO MEXICO.

LETTER XXIV.

THE CITY OF MEXICO.

Mexico, 8th March, 1849.

THAT happiness and misery, joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, are equally divided—equally mixed up for all men, is a theory which few are inclined to dispute. But I recollect my worthy and philosophical friend, Dr. F—, amused us one day on board ship, by treating the question under the less popular principle of moral compensation. In an ingenious dissertation which he gave us, he

maintained that a general law of compensation was established by our Creator; and that, in fact, the moral world was a "world of compensation." Every evil which a man suffered was (either known or unknown to himself) balanced by an exactly corresponding piece of good, and *vice versa*. It was on this principle, as experience, when properly analysed, demonstrated, that weal and woe were meted out to man—and meted out, too, in a measure more exact than any he used in his own scrupulous dealings.

"Now, for instance," said the doctor, "take my deafness. I consider it the great and leading misfortune of my life. But, I assure you, I have here examined the 'compensations' well, and I find that, on the whole, I have no reason to complain. Neither *do* I complain; or, if I find myself giving way to low spirits, on account of my great deafness, I rouse myself into cheerfulness, by recalling to my mind that, philosophically, morally, and religiously, I am wrong. I remember that the law of compensations has neutralised the deafness." This *argumentum ad hominem* came very happily to sustain the doctor's theory; for, with a shade of melancholy with which he was now and

then overcast, he was of a happy and playful disposition.

Pushing a little farther, my friend, the doctor's speculations on the compensating principle, in which I am a thorough believer, I have sometimes thought that it existed between the irrational and the rational animal—between the brute and human creation.

Man governs the brute, and to that extent he is apparently the happier of the two. But man is contented with none of his own pleasures: the brute is contented with all that instinct enables it to reach; so here lies a compensating power. The animal works and eats, and day by day is satisfied, careless of the future. Man's present happiness is often embittered by his fear of coming evils, and thus he is dissatisfied with what he actually enjoys. Were *you* ever in the position of *not* looking forward to a day which you hoped would bring you happiness, or which you feared had misery in store for you? *I* never was, nor do I believe was ever any one in this world. So man is, in some sort, a discontented animal. And then, when that to which he looks forward, as likely to make him more happy than he is, arrives, of a certainty

he finds himself disappointed, or discovers that he has something else in view, vastly more important, the accomplishment of which he eagerly anticipates. So he takes a new start, once more to hope—and once more to be undeceived; once more to agree with the poet, that "man never is, but always to be blest." He has but one sure refuge. "Blessed is the man that expecteth nothing, for verily he shall not be disappointed." *

All this, you may say peevishly, is very trite; not a doubt of it, my dear Sir; but then it suited my purpose to bore you with these truisms, because they were my stepping-stones to what I have to wind up with, viz., that having for years looked forward to the *pleasure* of visiting the city of Mexico, I am so far disappointed with it; and that accordingly I am now anxiously looking forward to the pleasure of returning to England.*

The *diligencia* carried us through a gateway into the great entrance to a large hotel; where in a moment, all was bustle and confusion. I was about to let Mr. Mackintosh know of our arrival,

* A travelled soldier once told me that only two things he had seen, exceeded his expectations, to wit: St. Peter's at Rome, and the Simplon line of road."

when he himself entered the *patio,* and we were introduced to him by Mr. Zurutuza, the great *Empresario* or proprietor of the *diligencias,* who had received us on our arrival. Mr. M— had been long looking out for H— and myself, and had no difficulty in recognising us. So, after shaking hands, he handed us into his carriage, in waiting, and the lively mules moved off at a brisk trot.

We drove into the *patio* of a handsome house, over the grand entrance of which were Her Majesty's arms; Mr. Mackintosh being British Consul. Mrs. M—, who is a Mexican lady, kindly welcomed us, and then left us to rest ourselves till the dinner hour.

Thus on Saturday afternoon, the 24th of February, we concluded our erratic journey from London to Mexico: wrecked, as we did *not* expect to be, at sea; not waylaid and robbed, as we *did* expect to be, by land; but happily reaching our destination at last, in safety, for which, God be praised! H— underwent the voyage uncommonly well, thereby diminishing the regret I could not help sometimes feeling, that I had acquiesced at all in her desire to accompany me. I little thought when I did give way, that she was to resume her

character as a traveller, under such buffetings as she received.

Next morning (Sunday), we rose late, but much refreshed. I found that we had arrived at an inopportune juncture, owing to the dangerous illness of the sister of Mrs. Mackintosh; but both she and Mr. Mackintosh said all they could to remove our uneasiness in thus unwittingly breaking in upon a domestic affliction.

In the afternoon, the carriage was ordered, and Mrs. Mackintosh begged us to take a drive, which we did, to the Paseo de las Vigas, of which I shall speak by and by.

To day I was introduced by Mr. Mackintosh to Mr. Doyle, Her Majesty's *Chargé d'Affairs,* who told me he would arrange for my being received *at court* on the Tuesday; very kindly assuring me, he would take care that the loss of my credentials should not debar me from at once commencing negociations. My first act on landing at Campeachy, had been to write to the Committee of Spanish American bondholders to lose no time in replacing their part of the papers I had lost at the shipwreck.

On Monday, the 26th, Mrs. Mackintosh's sister

died; an occasion on which, according to the usages of the country, a house remains "*en duelo*" in mourning, for nine days; and during which, the lady of the house is bound by the same usages to stay at home, to receive "*visitas de pesame*"—condolence visits—from her friends.

My introduction to the minister of foreign affairs having been deferred to Thursday, the 1st of March, Mr. Doyle then called at two o'clock, and drove me to "the palace." It is a quadrangular pile of building, occupying, with its spacious courts, a double block or square, equal I think, to six acres and a half of ground. Its principal front, which has a handsome and regular appearance, forms one side of the Plaza.

This once viceregal palace is so capacious, that it contains under its own roof, not simply a noble residence for the President, but nearly the whole of the public offices of the State; for here we have, in splendid suites of rooms, those of the Foreign, Home and Financial Ministries, and the Treasury; together with the Mint, Courts of Justice, Senate-house, Chambers of Deputies, and many others, even including a large barrack for the guards.

We drove in by the great gate of the principal court; and there leaving Mr. Doyle's carriage, we ascended an immensely wide staircase, leading by easy steps to the different *salons* of the Members of State. We were ushered into the suite composing the Foreign Office, where His Excellency Don Luis Gonzaga de Cuevas, and His Excellency (all the Mexican ministers have this title) Don Manuel Piña y Cuevas, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Finance, were ready to receive me, in the capacity of Commissioner of the Foreign Bondholders of the State.

Mr. Doyle introduced me in a suitable manner, by pointing out the importance of the business which had brought me to Mexico, and by kindly recommending me to the personal consideration of the Ministers. I then addressed them at some length, and each of them answered me in courteous terms. I replied in the same; and good faith, confidence and friendship, were mutually professed. Some general conversation ensued, principally about my unfortunate voyage, and the sufferings of the "*niña.*" The Foreign Secretary, who, *ex officio*, is Prime Minister, went so far as to give me an invitation to visit him at his private

residence; while the Minister of Finance proposed of himself to open business with Mr. Mackintosh and me this week. In short, all is *couleur de rose* so far; and it is not for me to anticipate, at present, that the affairs of the bondholders may hereafter assume some hue not quite so bright.

Friday, the 2nd, we spent in looking into Mr. Mackintosh's well selected library, and particularly into works on Mexico, and many illustrations of it, of an interesting kind.

On Saturday, the 3rd, I had the pleasure of dining with Mr. Doyle, and of making the acquaintance of some of the principal English residents, as well as of Mr. Thornton, *Attaché* of the Legation. I much admired Mr. Doyle's house—a handsome and commodious building, fitted up with great taste; while the hospitality of Her Majesty's representative, was in excellent keeping with his residence.

On Sunday the 4th, we had a visit from one of our fellow-sufferers in the shipwreck, Mr. D—; and we readily agreed to make the acquaintance, by and by, of the relatives with whom he lived. During these days of mourning, it did not seem proper to be going about, although in this respect, our host and hostess were most kind; and accord-

ingly to day, they again insisted on our taking the carriage and having our drive to the Paseo de las Vigas; which, as one of the most remarkable features of this place, I must, as I have said, describe to you anon.

On Sunday morning, the archbishop of Mexico having died of dyspepsia, his interment, with due pomp, was announced to take place at the Cathedral the following day. We missed the procession from the archiepiscopal palace, close to the cathedral; but I had previously taken H— to see His Grace lying in state.

Now you must read Madame C— de la B—'s book in order to have before you a lively picture of the *leperos*, the *lazzaroni* of Mexico—a disgusting race! Yet in the cathedral, which was crowded to excess, we found that three-fourths of the people assembled were these very *leperos*. It was a feast for the eyes and the olfactory nerves after such a fashion, as to render a description, I can assure you, "more honoured in the breach than the observance". So I hastened through the double *rank* and *de*-file of these worthies as fast as I could. The cathedral was hung with black; and in front of the great altar, placed on a *cata-*

falque, in form of a square *cenotaph*, lay the body of the prelate dressed in full pontificals, gloves and jewelled rings, yet withal, not to me, an agreeable, nor yet an edifying sight. The people about me seemed to think otherwise, and "*de gustibus*," etc. The body was deposited in a vault, after the procession. So on Sunday the good old archbishop was alive; created a fuss and a bustle in Mexico on Monday morning by reason of his funeral; was buried at two, P.M., that day; and by four, P.M., he was as much forgotten as if he had never lived. The affairs of the world are proverbially transitory; but transcendantly so are the affairs of Mexico. Suppose an archbishop of Canterbury were taken ill, continued ill, died and was buried. The event would be, at any rate, a nine days' wonder. What newspaper paragraphs! What enquiries, bulletins, biographies, eulogiums and clerical speculations! Whereas, here the honest archbishop dies, *empachado*,* without previous notice on Sunday is buried on

* I give the word as generally applied to the archbishop's illness here. In English and Spanish dictionaries it is translated "timid, bashful, surfeited." The bishop was neither *timid* (in the sense here meant), nor *bashful*. He died "Atrito"—labouring under an indigestion.

Monday, and forgotten on Tuesday. Surely we may, with our poet, here say, "Out! out! brief candle!"

From the cathedral, I drove H— to the "Casa de Mineria;" considered the finest building in Mexico in point of size and architecture. It was designed by the celebrated Spanish architect and sculptor Tolsa. The nearest resemblance we have to it, in *style* of architecture, is the new façade to our public offices in Parliament Street. But the Casa de Mineria forms a much nobler public building than any of our own; and perhaps it may vie with any other in Europe. It is vexatious, however, that from some defect in the foundation, the building has partially settled down, and thrown much of it out of the perpendicular. It not only mars the aspect of this palace, but endangers its duration. In 1827, Mr. Ward thought a few years would complete its destruction; but it still seems to remain firm, a species of leaning tower of Pisa.

From the Casa de Mineria we took a leisurely survey of the finest surrounding streets. A massive, but rude grandeur is the distinctive character of the palace-like houses of this splendid city,

The architecture is plain; but where you find a reasonable number of these palaces in good repair, their very simplicity of design, combined with magnitude, is imposing. Of the best houses the ground floor, surrounding two or three spacious courts, is used for counting-houses, warehouses, or other business purposes (where the establishment is mercantile), as well as for domestic offices of every kind — kitchens, store-rooms, coach-houses, stabling, servants' rooms, etc.; and where no business is carried on, these domestic offices still take up the ground floor.

We next went to the Paseo nuevo, or the Paseo de Bucarelli, the celebrated viceroy of that name.* Double rows of trees form the avenue a mile in length, with fountains and statuary both of a secondary class, here and there. It is the evening resort of the fashionables in their carriages, and on horseback, with a sprinkling of pedestrians.

On the 5th, I addressed a note to the Minister of Finance, saying that I should now be happy if he would fix a day for our first interview. I im-

* If you look into our second volume of "Letters on Paraguay," you will find under the head of "Expulsion of the Jesuits," that this same Bucarelli carried the expulsion into effect, being then viceroy of Buenos Ayres.

mediately received a polite answer, fixing Thursday for a conference. On that day, accordingly, accompanied by Mr. Mackintosh, as agent of the English bondholders, I waited on Don Manuel Piña y Cuevas. The interview convinced me that the Minister really and truly felt anxious to be the medium of re-establishing the credit of Mexico in England; so that if he continue in office, I entertain good hopes of a pleasant termination to my mission. After a long sitting, we adjourned to Saturday the 10th.

LETTER XXV

PUBLIC AND POLITICAL.

Mexico, 15th, March, 1849.

DURING the stay which, for a few months, I propose making in this city, it is my intention to give you, from time to time, such information as I can obtain and depend upon, of the political affairs of the country, and which may appear to me to be useful towards enabling your readers to form some tolerably clear conception of the actual state of Mexico. I have been but a short time in the capital; but I have already had an opportunity of conversing with many individuals, on whose judgment I can rely, and of whose practical acquaintance with the material interests, and political bearings and tendencies, of the country I am well assured.

* This letter (here slightly altered) was published in *The Times.*

The war with the United States ended by depriving Mexico of a large portion of her territorial possessions; although, if not again unceremoniously stripped of provinces, equal in extent to some kingdoms, enough is still left to form, progressively, the elements of one of the most important nations with which England, in the now altered state of European affairs, can possibly be connected. How deep is the interest of Great Britain in advancing the general prosperity, in raising the political character, and, above all, in upholding the prosperity of Mexico, based on the integral position of its present territory, I wish to show to you, and to all dispassionate and clear-headed Englishmen.

The treaty of peace concluded in Guadalupe Hidalgo, on the 2nd of February last year, left this country split into a variety of parties. Don Manuel de la Peña, who ratified the treaty, was only President, *ad interim*, of the Mexican Republic; and he immediately made room for the executive, constitutionally formed, which now governs the country. At its head is His Excellency General José Joaquin de Herrera, who was elected President, for the constitutional term of four years.

General Herrera's government professes to be of conservative principles; yet not indisposed to encourage progressive improvement; at the same time, it seems to be strongly suspected of secretly leaning to the United States. The opposing leading parties are, on the one side, that of the extreme liberals, or *puros*, as they are called; on the other, the monarchists, or tories, and strong religionists. But, apart from these, many influential people openly favour the influence and eventual domination of their northern conquerors —a mongrel Yankee party. Again, some respectable politicians desire to uphold a counteracting English policy, which unfortunately, however, is not greatly encouraged. A large number take the general view, that a foreign intervention of some kind is desirable, to prevent a total disruption of the elements of government, if confided exclusively to Mexican counsels: the *puros* are averse to foreign interference; while, finally, many are still partisans of General Santa Anna, and favourable to the aspirations of that ambitious chief.

But in the midst of these contending views and pretensions of declared politicians and their

partisans, there is, in the country at large, I think happily, for the present, great apathy in regard to politics of every kind. "*Pronunciamientos*" produce no excitement; they are neither favoured nor opposed; and by this *vis inertiæ* of the public mind, not by the inherent strength of the governing or any party, the country remains tranquil. Thus, the men now in power, although attacked on all sides, do not seem to be in any immediate danger of falling, through the efforts of the rival parties which surround them.

The President takes little or no part in the political movements of the country. All state business, he seems rightly to consider, devolves on his ministers, who are responsible *de jure*, although anything, I fancy, but assailable *de facto*. The four principal ministers are:—

Don Luis G. Cuevas, Foreign Affairs, and head of the Cabinet.

General M. Arista, Minister of War.

Don Manuel Piña y Cuevas, Minister of Finance.

Don J. M. Jimenez, Minister of Justice.

These cabinet ministers receive an annual salary of $6,000, or £1,200 each.

The legislature of the nation is constituted by

two chambers, one of senators, the other of deputies: the first are sixty-three in number, and receive from the treasury £700 a year each; the number of the second amounts to one hundred and forty, with £600 annually to each; all country members having a "*viatico*" or allowance for travelling expences to and from the scene of their labours. Some ill-natured persons have raised the question as to whether the country has "value received" from these two hundred and three gentlemen, for the £150,000 which, in all, the two chambers annually receive from the state.

At present the executive and legislative powers are outwardly anything but *d'accord* in their views. The ministers are constantly abused, in set terms, by the chambers; and the legislators as constantly receive their *quid pro quo* from ministers. Yet when a division is called, be the matter what it may, it is almost invariably in favour of the ministry. In fact many complaints are made openly, that the chambers do not act a very wise part: that they lose time, obstruct public business, or do nothing; that they shew little practical wisdom, and accomplish still less practical good, by their, too often, aimless, although laborious

and interminable projects and discussions. In saying this, I merely give the opinions which I hear, as I have been too short a time in Mexico to form any very correct one myself.

As in all other countries, here pre-eminently the public purse is the great object of attraction, and the great cause of political ferment. You will not be surprised to hear me say, that I have already come to the conclusion that Señor Piña y Cuevas, Chancellor of the Exchequer, does not always sleep on a bed of roses. Mexico is one of the most undeniable examples, that the facility of recovering taxes is by no means always on a par with the urgency and extent of the claims on the public treasury.

What I must say strikes every foreigner with utter amazement on his first acquaintance with Mexico, is, that seeing at every step he takes in this magnificent country, indubitable proofs of riches and resources in perennial abundance; wealth in every shape, mineral, cereal, pastoral; the earth teeming, in fact, with every country's product which man can use, exchange, and turn to his profit: that, seeing all this, he learns that the same country is utterly beggared and bankrupt

in public men, and public credit; and, as a natural consequence, that its public means, either dammed up or turned into wrong channels, are quite inadequate to meet the demands of the national expenditure.

As if this state of affairs were not sufficiently anomalous, the stranger, on landing in Mexico, is still farther stupified by a concurrent testimony, generally confirmed quickly by personal experience, that in a nation, having apparently all the elements of power,—fine cities and noble estates throughout the country, with mineral establishments which far surpass anything of the kind in any other part of the world; that in this Mexico, possessing seven or eight millions of inhabitants, he dare not pass from one province to another, without something like a certainty of being waylaid and robbed on all the public roads, and even in many of the public streets of the cities into which he enters.

A friendly and impartial examination of the real circumstances of a country, offering to the view so much of interest and so much of anomaly, cannot fail to be interesting to every philosophic mind; and, most of all, such an

enquiry ought to arouse the attention of every reflective Mexican, who can lay claim to one particle of patriotic feeling, or who can wince under a glow of shame burning on his brow, when reminded, that instead of advancing, as it ought, Mexico is every day so sinking in the scale of nations, as to give rise, on the part of her best friends, to many reasonable forebodings that her days are numbered as an independent nation.

The Ministers of State, Messrs. Cuevas, Arista, Piña y Cuevas, and Jimenez, have just published their respective reports, read to the "Camaras del Congreso General," on their assembling at the commencement of the year; and these elaborate reports, when analysed, may aid considerably in an examination of the foreign and domestic policy, the fiscal resources and obligations, the military and the judicial position of Mexico, as it at present exists—at least in so far as the ministers have thought it right to open up their views to the public. But we must not be content to judge of the state of the country merely by reports of ministers, who have always much more to withdraw from public scrutiny, than to lay bare to the vulgar gaze of the million. We must become acquainted with

the hidden motives of action, the passions, objects, affections, feelings and principles of public men, if we would dive into the arcana of their policy; and in regard to Mexico, this, by degrees, I may, perhaps, have the opportunity of doing. We must also carefully examine, in treating of the prospects and ultimate fate of this country, the political views, aims and interests of the allies most closely connected with it; and this also I hope, as I advance, to compass. Meantime it may be frankly said, for it is notorious to all the world, that the two powerful nations more immediately interested in the fate and fortunes of Mexico, are Great Britain and the United States of America.

At present, the matters which principally engross the public attention here, are the pecuniary embarrassments of the Government; the progressive application of the indemnity money, in course of payment by the United States; the project of a bank founded on the application of that fund, as the capital of such bank; and the urgent claim for payment of arrears and dividends, which the British bond-holders are making through their agents.

The indemnification money (given for Upper California and New Mexico), was fifteen millions

of dollars, payable in five equal yearly instalments, with interest, which raises the total amount to $16,800,000. Of this gross sum Mexico has received—

	DOLLARS.
The first instalment, amounting to .	3,000,000
Congress here lately authorised an appropriation from the second instalment of	800,000
It is now about to sanction a farther appropriation, the whole of which may be considered as spent . . .	1,500,000
In all	5,300,000

leaving the Mexican Government, between this and the end of 1852, yet to dispose of eleven millions and a half of dollars.

The bank project (if likely to be carried into effect), ways and means, and foreign and domestic debt of Mexico, I shall progressively examine, and then proceed to discuss the foreign and home policy of the country.

Every part of the United States of Mexico is at present tranquil. One or two *pronunciamientos* have lately been made in favour of Santa Ana; but, having been treated with much indifference, they have proved quite abortive. The press, how-

ever, discusses with great heat the question of General Santa Ana's being permitted, or not permitted, to return to Mexico. No law having as yet been passed to expatriate him, and a recent attempt having been made to make one, it is denounced as highly unconstitutional. The fact is, Santa Ana himself knows that this is not a right time for his re-appearance on the political stage; and it is therefore thought unlikely that he will, for the present, interfere with the actual order of affairs.

El Ilustrisimo Señor Don Juan Manuel Yrizarri, who, as Vicar Capitular, administered the archbishopric of Mexico, died a fortnight ago, and has been replaced by Don José Maria Barriento. I may just remark here, as a proof of the amount of religious bigotry still existing in Mexico, that toleration having been spoken of by some liberal members in Congress, petitions from all quarters of the interior against it have been presented to that body.

All the mining districts continue to yield in great abundance, and the material riches of the country rapidly advance. Mercantile business is also brisk and good, and imports have been

rather large. No *Conducta* having come in from Guanajuato, none has gone down to Vera Cruz for the present packet. The Exchange value of a dollar here for bills on England is $44\frac{1}{8}d.$; but as a reduction of the export duty on silver is on the *tapis*, no considerable amount of bills on London can be negotiated, so that the rate is almost nominal.

As the February packet had not arrived, three days ago, at Vera Cruz, we are under the persuasion that the line has been deranged by the loss of the Forth, and that our Mexican correspondence has been forwarded from Havana by a sailing vessel. By way of the United States, we long ago received London dates to the 26th of January.

LETTER XXVI.

RETROSPECTIVE.

Mexico, 6th March, 1851.

"My last letters from Vera Cruz,* as well as those from my father, informed you that we should start two days afterwards, which we did. By *this* packet you will see such long details of our doings, from Vera Cruz to 'the city,' that I shall give you *my* account of them as shortly as I can.

"The ball, to which we went at Vera Cruz, was really very pleasant and amusing. There were some pretty girls, and almost all were nicely dressed. Part of the printed announcement of the ball was, that 'quadrilles, waltzes, and country dances will be danced alternately; and those young ladies who may wish to dance the polka, shall be satisfied to their hearts' desire.' So, you may perceive,

* Not inserted here. [H— now writes].

they have only just got to the polka, and that as yet the *deux temps* is to them a mystery.

"We left Vera Cruz, then, on the 18th and arrived here on the 24th. The first part of the road is so bad, that the breaking down of the *diligencia* is a common occurrence; and as for the bones of the unhappy passengers, they suffer, I hear, considerably. We avoided the possible fractures, by going as far as Jalapa in a *litera*, a slow-and-sure style of travelling, quite new to us.

"We started in the evening, the heat being too great during the day to allow of travelling with ease, either to man or beast, and we arrived at our first stage at three A.M. next day, very tired and cramped, having had but little room for a change of position in the *litera*. These conveyances are something between a palanquin and a sedan-chair, just large enough to admit of two persons reclining (not at full length) *herring fashion*; so that it is very easy for the feet of the one traveller to come into disagreeable contact with the head of the other, and frequent collisions of this sort took place between us. There are pillows at each end, a canvass roof, and curtains of the same material all around.

"Of Puente and its fine bridge, you will hear from the journalist. We started again in the afternoon, arriving at five next morning at Jalapa, a place of which we had heard much, being celebrated for its beautiful scenery and fine climate. Here we rested two days, enjoying ourselves much, and seeing something of the country. All sorts of lovely flowers and shrubs were blooming in the greatest profusion, yet the temperature was delightfully cool, and it rained a good deal. I thought the weather even *cold* in the evenings.

"We proceeded on our journey in the *diligencia*. Some of the passengers were armed, and all seemed to think it next to impossible that we should reach the city without an encounter with the *ladrones*, who generally lighten the diligence of luggage, and passengers of dollars, once or twice a week!

"We thought that we only required this to make our chapter of accidents complete; but although we were entertained all the way with anecdotes of these '*cavalleros*,' we were not favoured with a visit from them, which, on the whole, most of us seemed not to regret.

"Mr. M— received us in the *diligencia* office,

on our arrival here, and took us at once to his house. Both Mr. and Mrs. M— received us most kindly, although we could scarcely consider ourselves otherwise than as intruders, from the dangerous illness of Mrs. M—'s sister, who required at the time her exclusive attention.

"The houses here inhabited by the upper classes are very handsome, and for the most part magnificent in size. They are almost all alike, and in describing one, you may almost say I describe them all. This is one of the best—very nicely fitted up and very large. The suites of rooms are of fine dimensions, with lofty ceilings. The ground floor is devoted to business and offices, etc.; then you mount a very wide staircase, and enter a square, as it were, with a wide corridor running along two sides, from which, and from the windows on the other side, you look down upon the *patio* below. You enter the different rooms from the corridor, which is adorned with fine shrubs, plants, runners, and flowers. All the rooms are fitted up in the European style, and much more like what we see at home than I had expected.

"We arrived, as I have said on the 24th, and

next day we took a drive to Las Vigas—during Lent, *the* fashionable drive and ride. It was very full, and amused us greatly, as it does every stranger on first seeing it. There were two rows of carriages, and many equestrians; and, indeed, we had to stop very often from the number of conveyances which obstructed our way. There were some few very handsome equipages; but speaking generally of Mexican carriages, they have something incongruous. Either the harness is bad, or the servants are queerly dressed, or the mules look small and miserable—for mules are much more used than horses—and this alone takes away much from the good effect. I have never seen an open carriage—at least for ladies. As the fair sex here consider it *not respectable* to walk in the streets or gardens (except very early in the morning), a carriage is indispensable to *respectability*; and many families, who have nothing else to correspond, drive about behind their *pair* of mules, for a one animal carriage is almost unknown.

"But to return to this drive, or Mexican Hyde Park. It certainly is most amusing, for the variety of costumes, especially of the equestrians,

and of odd figures, seemed to me to be endless. Then the ladies are in evening toilette, which looks strange in the daylight. Again, running parallel with the road, there is the canal which it would indeed require a stretch of imagination to fancy the Serpentine. You see it covered as you drive along, with canoes full of 'darkies,' who play a sort of banjo and lyre, or small harp, and sing their strange monotonous songs—and *fool it*—on any part of the foot but the 'light fantastic toe' —their grave and absurd-looking dances—whilst they are all evidently enjoying life, dressed out in their gayest, and crowned with wreaths of flowers of the brightest hue. I shall be quite sorry when Lent is over, for then 'el paseo de las Vigas' is no more resorted to, but is replaced by the Paseo Nuevo, which is just a straight road, lined by trees, its great beauty consisting in the view of the snowy mountains, of unpronounceable names.

"Ladies must not, as I say, walk out after early morning (which you may suppose does not suit me), when they may be supposed going to and returning from mass. During the day, however short the distance, or fine the weather, you must go in your carriage. I hear the rides are very

pretty, and I want exercise, for I only at present have a drive in the afternoon to the Paseo. So I have been longing for my *habit,* which has come up to-day with our heavy luggage.

"From what I have seen of Mexico, I think I shall enjoy my visit to the city very much, though I do not think I should like it as a residence. There is hardly any English society; and till I know Spanish better, of course I cannot enjoy the native. Several English ladies have left lately, and at present there are but three besides myself.

"From different causes, we have been living very quietly since our arrival here. In the first place, Mrs. M. lost her only sister the day after our arrival; in the second, we are in Lent; and in the third, we have had but scanty wardrobes till to-day.

"We have, however, been twice to the theatre, which is a very handsome one indeed. It has not been built many years, is in excellent taste, and the form of it very good. Mr. M.'s box is one of the best, close to the stage, large, with a retiring room. During Lent, dramatic performances are not allowed, so they have got up an operatic company (Mexican), which, although not such as we

should listen to in England, pleases me, as yet, more than the plays. The first night we went they gave the Somnambula, with the Italian text, of course. I certainly did not admire the Elviro, who could neither boast of voice nor good looks. The Amina was much better, although the 'Ah! non giunge' was too much for her. The orchestra was terrible; while the best part of the performance was the chorus, which was small, but the voices were fair, and they sang in good time and tune. The second night, we saw 'Lucia,' in which all got on better; and, altogether, it amuses me very much. But stay, I am omitting my principal point—the audience, or 'concurrencia.' The ladies are, in general, nice-looking, and a good many very pretty; and almost all dressed in good taste."

LETTER XXVII.

DIARY OF A MONTH.

Mexico, 10*th April*, 1849. –

FOLLOWING up my plan of giving you *something* by every packet, till I get to England once more, I resume the thread of my story from the departure of our last mails.

We have now resided here six weeks, and, as a natural consequence, I now know something more of the *City* of Mexico than I did at the close of my last letter; and I shall accordingly go on in my journalising way, and desultory mode of observation.

On the 9th of March we began to look for the packet—for its arrival is *the* event of the month—and we seemed to have been an age without letters from England. Ah! how few are there, man or woman, born on English ground, who do not, on quitting *home* for a foreign country, leave behind the greater part of his or her affections

and pleasurable associations! And how do we long accordingly for those periodical arrivals, which are to delude us into a momentary belief that we are placed in contact with all those who have principally occupied our thoughts and feelings in the interval! "Letters from home!" "The packet letters!" None but those who *have* been abroad know all the magic influence on the heart of these short but significant exclamations.

No packet, however, came in on the 9th; and instead of reading letters we made the acquaintance of Mrs. and Miss C—, wife and daughter of a highly respectable old English gentleman, in business here, and with whom I had previously become acquainted. Miss C— is lively, clever, thoroughly at home with the Spanish language, and well acquainted with Mexican character. Her acquaintance is a great acquisition to H—.

Saturday, the 10th, no packet; and therefore we feel unable to *settle down* to prepare letters for its return, although we ought to do so, Beraza being now under official orders for a start on the 15th. The 13th is the usual day, but *February* makes the difference on this occasion.

Mr. M. and I again waited on the Minister of

Finance, and after transacting business, and satisfactorily forwarding the object of my mission, towards which we remained nearly two hours with his Excellency, we agreed to meet once more before the packet sailed, to settle as to the official communications which it was to take forward.

Sunday, the 11th; a case of "hope deferred." Still no packet, and therefore a continuance of that *ansia*—that longing desire for letters kept up. We had several visits to-day, among them Dr. M'C— (our medical man)—a truly pleasant, intelligent, and amusing countryman of my own, and Don José Martinez del Rio, one of our old London acquaintances—an agreeable friend, and a leading man here.

Monday, the 12th. Still no packet; and we begin to fancy that the loss of the Forth has so deranged the route, as to prevent the packet of this month from coming to Vera Cruz at all. I had my promised meeting with Mr. Piña y Cuevas to-day, towards arranging for the packet. All satisfactory; and the continuance of that gentleman in office seems all that is wanting to give the best effect and happiest termination to my mission.

Tuesday, 13th, we were engaged all day writing. But still no packet letters, and all are agreed that if they are not with us by the 14th, they may be given up.

Wednesday, 14th. No packet! In such a case as this, every new day of disappointment adds its quota to the accumulated heap of impatience already resting on the mind. *Vires acquirit eundo.* But the mail for England was advertised at the *lonja* (Exchange), to be made up at eight, A.M., the following day; and our *Chargé d'affaires* assured us he could not possibly detain his courier. So all were obliged to go on in good earnest with their correspondence. From Don Manuel Piña y Cuevas I received an excellent letter for transmission to London.

Thursday, 15th, to our joy and surprise, our famous courier, Beraza "the desired" arrived with the mails; and Mr. Doyle could not do otherwise than allow our tired, though unflinching friend, twenty-four hours' rest. So another day was given us. We got budgets of letters, keeping us busier than ever all this day. At ten at night, I received another letter from Señor Piña y Cuevas, announcing an unexpected and unasked-for remit-

tance of ten thousand pounds for the bond-holders, which was really pleasant. I did not finish my correspondence till eight, A.M., Friday morning; and Beraza was finishing the packing of his mail towards starting, when I gave him some tolerable packets, as my contribution to the general correspondence.

We rested on Friday; and our luggage which we had left at Vera Cruz, arriving the same day, we spent Saturday, the 17th, in unpacking, arranging, and finishing in a desultory way, a very busy week.

For two or three Sundays we had been talking of a drive to the village of Tacubaya, the celebrated and fashionable resort of the *elite* of Mexico; and to-day, Sunday, the 18th, it was determined we should proceed to that place. Accordingly at eleven o'clock, behold the *coche de Campo*, the *country* carriage drawn out; the handsome and sturdy mules harnessed, the postillion mounted, the footman in the rumble, Mrs. M—, H— and I inside; and Mr. M—, *a la Mexicana*, on his handsome iron grey, with his groom behind him in the costume of the country, and also on a fine spirited horse, in which form and state we dashed off for Tacubaya.

We went out by the *Paseo nuevo*, the road lying, as far as Chapultepec, along one of the two immense aqueducts which supply the city of Mexico with water. They are characterised by that solidity which I have told you, is the great feature of all Spanish architecture; but like all their works, also, they are in any thing but good repair. Of Chapultepec I shall speak when I come to tell you of a visit *ex profeso* to it. From this point we went on about a mile and a half, principally through plantations of the Maguey, and over a brown, uninteresting part of the Mexican plain.

The hilly country commences at Tacubaya, and the village is prettily situated in the lap of an ascending ground, the villas with which it is dotted, commanding generally a beautiful view of the plain, the city, Chapultepec, and the neighbouring mountains. Tacubaya itself looks best at a distance. Among the whitewashed houses and villas, glittering in the sun, trees (all evergreens) are thickly interspersed, relieving the glare, and contrasting happily with the monotonous brown levels which lie below. But when you enter the village, the deep sandy roads, the dirty people, and the many mean and untidy habitations, with

every here and there a ruinous one, offend the eye of an Englishman, accustomed to the pretty villages of his own country.

We kept ascending through the village, and, arriving at about the highest point, we got to the Rancho de los Remedios; a quaint name given by Mr. Mackintosh to his "casa de campo" at Tacubaya. He held for several years there a large house (belonging to the Marquis de Guadalupe), and passed a considerable part of the year in it. Being obliged, however, to give up the Marquis's house, Mr. Mackintosh, in order to *remedy* his wants, built his *rancho* or cottage, and called it "el Rancho de los Remedios," this latter name being at the same time one of the titles of the Virgin Mary, "Nuestra Señora de los Remedios," enshrined in her chapel, not far from Tacubaya.

El Rancho de los Remedios is a gem; that is, if one could divest one's mind of the dissatisfied feeling which arises on finding that a country house has no more grounds about it than a lawn and flower garden, which Mr. M. jokingly says "may be covered by a table-cloth." But this granted, the Remedios is a beautiful *multum in parvo*. For the house itself, nothing could be

better or prettier. It is of two floors, with two small projecting wings. From the one to the other, on both floors, run wide, spacious, handsome corridors, adorned with a profusion of well-filled flower-pots, and with vases holding scented shrubs and luxuriant creepers. The front windows and balconies overlook the city, the valley, Chapultepec, and a grand amphitheatre of mountains. These corridors, particularly the upper one, constitute a remarkably nice promenade; and a little *boudoir* simply but elegantly furnished, which forms one wing, opens, like the drawing-rooms, on the higher corridor, making this part of the establishment complete. The lower corridor is also ornamented with flowers and shrubs; so that, however limited the space, there was everything you could desire to find in a cottage *ornée*.

On Monday, the 19th, we called on Mrs. and Miss C—, who may be called the female representatives of England in Mexico—for Mrs. J—, our only other countrywoman at present, lives constantly at Tacubaya. Then we went to see our pleasant fellow passengers, Dr. D— and his Chihuahua wife, residing with their friend, Mr. A—. They were greatly pleased to talk over with us all

the perils and incidents of our passage from England.

At dinner, this day, we had two visitors—new arrivals. One was Mr. F—, whom I knew well by report, and who came as representative of Messrs. Baring Brothers, and Co., to assist in carrying into effect their negotiation for the payment of the present instalment of the indemnity money, through Messrs. Manning and Mackintosh. The other is Mr. E. B—, who accompanies Mr. F—, intending to enter by-and-bye on a wide field of travel.

For the evening (19th) H— and I had an engagement, which we could not decline, to a small *tertulia,* at the house of the *licentiate* and judge of the district, el Señor Inclan, to whom we were to be introduced by La Señorita Robles, the young, amiable, and lively sister of Commandant Robles, of Vera Cruz, and of whom I have spoken so highly. Doña Carmelita called for us, and we went together in her carriage to the Inclans. We were received by them in the most cordial manner, and found them to be people "according to one's own heart;" so much so, that we did not get home till two in the morning.

On Wednesday, the 21st, great was my surprise to see Mr. C—, from Liverpool, walk into the library, where I sat writing this diary. He was one of the last persons I saw in England, and so far was he then from thinking of visiting Mexico, that he offered me letters of introduction to Mr. and Mrs. J— here, of the same mercantile house as himself. But such is the present age of travel! Last century, the fashion was to make one's will before undertaking, with fear and trembling of his household, a journey of a few hundred miles. In these fast times, we pack up a portmanteau in the morning, say "*au revoir*" in the evening, and take our departure to another hemisphere—to go and to return in a shorter time than was occupied by our forefathers between London and Edinburgh.

On the 21st, we made the acquaintance of Don Juan L—, of decided notability. He is, at present (although, I understand, on the point of resigning), *Impresario*, or lessee of the Grand National Theatre. He is a native of Spain, of good family, and held a high office in this country under the Spanish *régime*. He is decorated with a Spanish order of knighthood, and he is generally

called by his English friends, "Sir J—." His house is one of the most fashionable; his daughters and niece are leading *belles* of the *haut ton*. Lastly, "Sir J—" is a "*corredor de numero*," or sworn-broker, and he frequents the *lonja* in the afternoon, mixing mostly with the leading English subscribers. He keeps a handsome equipage, gives an excellent dinner, and his *tertulias** are quite the thing. By some misunderstanding (I suppose); some intricacy of Mexican etiquette, on our arrival—which I have not been able to fathom—we have not got into visiting terms with Sir J—'s amiable and distinguished family.

We had more or less our usual routine up to the 28th, when, having previously made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. J—, an English family, as I think I have mentioned, they gave us a quiet and therefore a pleasant family dinner, enlivened by Mr. C—, my friend from Liverpool, and Mr. Morphy, equally a Mexican and Englishman, lively, intelligent, and finally, one of the Murphy's of the celebrated colony of Cadiz, of which I have spoken in my 15th letter, Vol. I., page 236.

* For *tertulia*, we have no English synonym. The French have *soirée*.

We dined at half-past three. In the evening the ladies went to the Paseo; Mrs. J—'s turn-out being one of the best. Altogether, we passed a delightful evening, and got home just in time to go over the same pleasant ground with our own party; which, at half-past nine had adjourned to coffee in the drawing room.

LETTER XXVIII.

DIARY OF A MONTH CONCLUDED.

Mexico, 10th April, 1851.

SATURDAY, the 31st, was a day of diplomatic courtesies. Our *Chargé d'affaires* accompanied us to the French Legation, there to be introduced to the Minister and his lady. Our party was made up of Mr. and Mrs. M—, H—, Messrs. F— and B—, and myself, led by Mr. Doyle. The Legation occupies one of the handsomest houses in Mexico, in a fashionable street, with the odd name of "Calle de Don Juan Manuel."

M. Levasseur speaks little Spanish as yet; but he is refined and piquant in his own language. Madame is a German lady; lively, clever, intellectual, and accomplished, speaks five or six languages fluently, and has some knowledge of

Greek and Latin. She was *tres aimable* with us; and we all received invitations to the first of her soirées, for Monday the 9th of April.

I am writing a second letter on the politics of Mexico by the packet; so on that point I will only say that my respected friend and coadjutor, Don Manuel Piña y Cuevas, Minister of Finance when I arrived, having resigned, he determined to give a soirée, dedicated "a la Niña Henriqueta," not only as a proof of his personal regard, but as a dèmonstration of his sympathies with me in my public capacity. He invited us by a very kind note, and we went accordingly on Saturday, the 31st (March). Messrs. M—, F—, and B— were dining with Sir J. L—; but they joined us later in the evening.

Mr. Piña y Cuevas may not be called of the highest grade of the *haut ton*; but I can only say, we found at his party a great many agreeable people, including his relative, Cuevas, Prime Minister, many senators, members of the Camara de Diputados, and others. The most marked attention was paid to H— all night, and the utmost solicitude was shewn to amuse us both. We had

an excellent concert, one of the principal performers being la Señorita Cossio, *prima donna* at the Grand Theatre. After her first song, she was led to a seat next to my own. I did not then know who she was, for she had not performed in either of the two operas I had seen, and I had not heard her name in the salon. I turned round to her, and making a bow, said, "I perceive, Señorita, that better music is to be heard in the drawing-rooms of Mexico than in the Grand Theatre."

"*Es favor que V. me hace.*"—"You are complimentary," answered the young lady, smiling.

"My dear sir," said a gentleman who stood by, "you are addressing la Señorita Cossio, of whose name you surely cannot be ignorant."

I explained how it was, and during the evening I enjoyed a good deal of the sprightly conversation of the amiable *prima donna*. Let me state, to her great honour, the origin of her singing in public. Her father was a highly respectable gentleman, moving in the best circles. By some misfortune he lost his property, died, and left his widow and family unprovided for. Miss Cossio hesitated not to avail herself of her great musical talents. She

made a successful *debut*, maintains her mother, with whom she lives, and herself comfortably, and is universally respected. I talked also to Madame Cossio, who doats on her daughter, and listens to her praise with an honest maternal pride.

After the concert, refreshments of every kind were served; dancing and conversation ensued, and highly pleased with our entertainment, we retired at a very late hour. I must not omit to mention, that the finest girl present was the young and elegant Miss Cortina, daughter of the Conde and Madame Cortina, so often mentioned by their friend, Madame C— de la B—.

On the 1st of April, I went with a party to visit the little town of Guadalupe, chiefly celebrated for its church, the sanctuary of "Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe," the patroness saint of Mexico.

The road to Guadalupe, after you emerge from the dirty suburbs, goes along a fine causeway, lined with trees, and is about three miles from the centre of the City of Mexico. The church was not built to meet the wants "of a town population;" but the town has grown out of the celebrity of our Lady's church. It is built at the foot of a hill called Tepayac, on the summit of which

once stood the temple of Tonantzin. How this Indian place of worship fell into decay I need not particularise; but how the Virgin's sanctuary arose and flourished close by, must claim our passing notice, for it sprang from a miracle.

Madame C— de la B— had the celebrated tradition related to her by the old bishop at Guadalupe, and he seems to have taken the merit of the account to himself; but the rogue had stolen it from a printed sermon of the Cardinal di Lorenzano, Archbishop of Mexico, preached in 1760. The curtailed particulars are these.

Upwards of three centuries ago, and ten years after the conquest, the Virgin Mary appeared to an Indian called Juan Diego, as he passed the mountain of Tepayac, desiring him to go to the bishop, and to order him to come and worship her on that spot. Diego, not being admitted to the bishop, returned and told the Virgin so. He was ordered to return with the message of "Mary, the Mother of God." So he did; saw the bishop, who refused any credence to the miracle, unless verified by a token. Whereupon Diego saw the Virgin for the third time, when she desired him to ascend the rugged mountain, and thence bring

her *roses*. Desert as he knew the place to be, Juan Diego joyfully mounted the rocky eminence, found and cut the roses, and throwing them into his tilma, or apron, brought them to Mary. She sent him with them as "the token" to the bishop. The apron unfolded, and the roses drawn forth, "*lo! there appeared on the rude garment that blessed picture of the Virgin*, which now, after centuries, still exists, without having suffered the slightest injury!" Such is the miracle, as related by the archbishop; but we have not his authority for what is averred by others, namely, that not only the apron, but every leaf of every rose plucked by Juan Diego, bore the impress of the Virgin, now known as of Guadalupe.

Be that as it may, you will readily suppose that no time was lost in rearing a church to our Lady of Guadalupe on Tepeyac; and so successfully did the shrine bring wealth to the church, that, a second and more magnificent one — that now standing — replaced the first: while "Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe" has, indeed, become a household word over the length and breadth of Mexico.

The church itself has nothing to boast of in its architectural claims, but its interior decorations

are sumptuous in the extreme. "The altar at the north end," says Mr. Brantz Mayer, "and the canopy and pillars around it, are of the finest marbles. Above it, in a frame of solid gold, covered with a crystal plate, is the figure of the Virgin, painted on the Indian's tilma, as represented in the preceding cut. On each side of the image, within the frame, and extending its whole length, are strips of gold literally crusted with emeralds, diamonds, and pearls. At the feet of the figure there are again large clusters of the same costly gems. From each side of the frame issues a circle of golden rays; while above it, as if floating in the air, hangs the figure of a dove, of solid silver, as large as a goose."

When we went into the church, I found that thorough repairs were going forward, painting and gilding the dome, roofs, walls and recesses, in the richest manner. Votaries and visitors were entering and leaving, while at a table sat a woman before a complete ribbon stall! All sorts of devices were stamped on these ribbons, illustrative of the history of the tutelary saint. Then in a corner was a male attendant with *medals* for sale. I bought one for four rials, with about one rial's

worth of silver in it, the rest copper. It is oblong, under an inch and a half in length; has on one side the Virgin of Guadalupe, with "N. S. D. Guadalupe de Mexico. A. 1805," as the surrounding inscription. On the obverse side is, "NON FECIT TALITER OMNI NATIONI." With this medal I received a small printed paper (in which I now keep the medal), which is worth transcribing and translating. It runs thus:—

"Nuestro Santisimo Padre, el Señor Pio VI., por su breve de 13 de Abril de 1785, concedio indulgencia plenaria para la hora de la muerte, á todas las personas que trajeren consigo una de las MEDALLAS DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE GUADALUPE, que se expenden, benditas en su santuario." Which being translated, says:—

"Our most Holy Father, the sovereign Pope Pius VI., by his brief of the 13th of April, 1785, has conceded plenary indulgence, in the hour of death, to all those who shall then have upon them, ONE OF THE MEDALS OF OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, which, ready blest, are sold in her sanctuary."

I must mention two or three other particulars about the village of Guadalupe, and then leave it.

A couple of hundred yards from our Lady's

church is a holy spring-well, the filthiest puddle imaginable, under a dome, or small chapel; and the Indians being persuaded that the water is blessed by the Guadalupe herself, they flock to it daily and hourly in hundreds often, and not unfrequently by thousands. They bless themselves in it—they duck themselves in it; the women, with their miserable little children buckled on their backs, bend over the sacred and very dirty fluid, and get at it in any way they can. Finally, hundreds come with cans and rude vessels, and carry the water away, not only from the fount, but from the gutters which run from it.

A strange, rough, broken, but wide flight of steps, cut out in the rock, leads you from the dome to the top of Tepeyac, where stands another chapel. Thence we had a splendid view of Mexico, the plain, and the mountains.

Then midway, on this ascent, stands a singular mass of brick-work, rising up in the form of a ship's sail, rudely shaped, the votive offering of a tempest-tossed Spanish skipper, who, in a violent storm, prayed to our Lady of Guadalupe, was heard, and saved. When he got safely to port, he hastened to prostrate himself at her shrine, and

raised, in the brick sail, the palpable manifestation of his faith and gratitude.

From Monday the 2nd, to Saturday the 7th, I was entirely occupied with official duties and correspondence. Many a hot walk had I across the great Plaza, to the palace; and I do believe I shall at last go away with a more accurate recollection of the façade of the Cathedral, the Portales and the bazaars of the Plaza, the courts of the palace, and its wide but tiresome staircases, than any traveller who has visited the city of Mexico.

For Sunday the 8th, we had accepted of an invitation from Mr. and Mrs. J—, to spend the day at Tacubaya, and afterwards to dine with them in town.

Having by this time, with the assistance of Mr. T. M—, bought myself a handsome and fiery little Mexican steed, for which I paid sixty dollars, or £12, I set off on him with Messrs. J— and C—, at eight o'clock A.M., leaving H— to come out with Mrs. J— in the carriage, Miss C— being also one of the party. They took the usual road, whereas we went round by the *Garita*, one of the great outlets of Mexico, and which leads on to

one of the finest of the avenues,* because the longest, which give so much beauty to the outskirts of the city. Turning off to the right from this splendid ride and drive, about half way, we entered on an Hacienda, which led us across to Tacubaya, whence we obtained a beautiful view of the village reposing in the lap of the hills, which gradually rise amphitheatrically behind.

Mr. J—, having purchased a piece of land, lying at the entrance of the village, and which he had bought very cheap, determined to convert it into an English villa and pleasure grounds; and, as often happens, the size of the house, as originally planned, increased under the improvements which architects generally suggest, *after* the plan and estimate are agreed upon. Be that as it may, Mr. J— has displayed indisputably good taste in the formation of his fine residence. The house is quadrangular, each side presenting a handsome front; it has two floors, the rooms on which are all large and lofty; the staircases, rooms, and balconies are spacious and elegant; and the architecture of the whole is good. The pleasure-grounds,

* The *commencement* of it, however, is most noisomely trying to the olfactory nerves.

to the extent of four or five acres, prettily laid out, *à la Inglesa*, are as yet rather bare, from the want of full-grown trees; but every year lessens this defect. The rapidly-growing ash, and other trees, are fast producing shady walks.

One of the prettiest things belonging to this handsome country-house, is the porter's lodge, in which we spent the day. The mansion itself not being yet furnished, Mrs. J— has had the lodge fitted up for temporary use; and it forms a pretty specimen of an English cottage transplanted to the valley of Mexico.

Tacubaya has been called the Richmond of Mexico; and if a river like the Thames flowed past the former, the comparison might hold good, physically and fashionably. As it is, Tacubaya does appear to be to Mexico what Richmond is to London—the resort of rich families to their handsome villas, during the "season." And from the higher parts of Tacubaya, as from Richmond Hill, the view obtained might vie for beauty with that of the finest summer retreat possessed by any capital in the world.

We returned in the cool of the evening; dined, according to promise, with Mr. and Mrs. J—, and,

being joined by Dr. M—, we spent the remainder of the evening agreeably. The doctor is certainly an estimable member of the English society here; and when perfectly at his ease with associates whom he values—for in him the spark which lies in the flint requires to be struck out by the steel—he is amusing, intellectual, and humorous.

Monday, the 9th (Easter Monday), was a day so important to the Mexican ladies, that we heard of it four and twenty hours after we landed at Vera Cruz, just two months before. "You will have an opportunity," said Mr. D— to H—, "of seeing all the beauty of Mexico at the ball of the French embassy; it is to be given on Easter Monday." In point of fact, if I were to transfer to my paper all that has, during these two months, been said, in the higher circles, of Madame de Levasseur's coming ball, I should have to give you three-fourths of the fashionable conversation of that momentous interval.

"How are we to dress?" that was the puzzling point. Madame had begged all her friends to go "plainly attired."

"Will Mrs. A—," said Mrs. B—, "obey the

mandate? And if she does not, won't it be because she desires to outshine me?"

Now it was rumoured that all were to go in court dresses, resplendent with diamonds, pearls, and other precious stones: anon, it was reported that all those who went so, would be ridiculed, pooh-poohed, and laughed at.

After all, as if by common consent, the Mexican *belles* hit on the *juste milieu*; they were all elegantly, and not over dressed. Madame collected an assemblage overflowing with the *élite* of the Mexican metropolis. The only plainly, perhaps quaintly dressed lady in the splendid saloon of the French Minister, was our clever and accomplished hostess herself.

There were a great many fine women, and some very beautiful girls present. The lady did the honours with grace, kindness, and intelligence, talking alternately with all in their own language—Spanish, French, German, Italian, and English. The thing "went" *à merveille*, with one most extraordinary exception, and that was the music. If I indulge in a little raillery on this score, Madame cannot take it amiss, for it was certainly no fault of hers. She laughed at it very much herself. She

could not *make* a band—she must take what was made to her hand in Mexico.. And what a band! With a recollection of Strauss's, of Weippert's, and of Jullien's, the Mexican band was something to tickle the fancy of the humourist.

Figure to yourself, in the recess of one of the windows, level with the floor, and in no way separated from the company, eight or ten "unshaven, unshorn," half lame, blind tatter-demalion music-scrapers, pouring forth tinklings and sounds which would have driven Jullien stark staring mad in two minutes! And then calling themselves the fashionable quadrille band of the court of Mexico! Instead of grand piano, a sort of hurdy-gurdy! instead of violin and violoncello, thumb-thrummed old guitars! a shrieking fife, for the melodious flute! and Heaven knows what other sorts of incongruous instruments of Mexican origin, to make up for the want of flageolet, oboe and bassoon!

Every thing else was perfect: so think to European eyes and ears how singular the effect of these musicians, and of their music must have been. The *charivari* of a rustic wedding in England, transferred to Almacks'!

But so it is in Mexico; you have often to remark one incongruity or another; there is a want of right keeping in *all* its parts; and in some cases there is such a jumble of grandeur and meanness, of luxury and discomfort, of exterior show defective in its detail, of an attempt often at everything, and of an incompleteness in such attempts, that an Englishman is first struck with a grand idea of the *tout ensemble*, and then amused when he begins to examine the details. In England, the head of a family advancing in wealth and station, begins by "making things comfortable at home"; gets a better house, better furnished; puts smarter furniture into it; increases the number of his servants; improves his *cuisine;* indulges in better wines, and more of them; sees his friends oftener; and *at last*, sets up his carriage. Here, by high and low, the one thing considered indispensable is—the carriage. The higher and richer classes, in virtue of their rank and means have their splendid equipages, a large proportion got up in first-rate style: but many families, far removed from the upper and even middle circles; living in mean and dirty houses; unheedful of domestic comforts; scarcely (sometimes) a whole chair to sit

upon; pinched for a coarse and scrimp dinner; put in short to their daily shifts to live—such a family must nevertheless keep their carriage. It may be an old-fashioned, dirty, broken-down, rumbling concern, built in the year one; it may be dragged by two wretched mules in tattered harness; it may boast for coachman of a half-clad Mexican, in his shirt sleeves, and broad-brimmed glazed hat; but still it is the *coche*; and moreover, another Mexican, a grade or two beyond the *lepero* may hang on behind, and pass as the lacquey of the family carriage.

Perhaps I ought to suppress some of these unpalatable particulars of unwholesome habits in Mexico; but I have Shakespeare's authority for what I do; "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

We had an opportunity, as I have said, of seeing at Madame de Levasseur's all the beauty of the highest class here; and certainly, if not general, there were at any rate, very many specimens of fine and pretty women in the room. I incline to think, at the same time, that the middle class, being much more numerous, boasts in its ranks of a greater aggregate of female beauty, than we find among the exclusives.

But like Spanish and Spanish-American women generally, they are here, in all ranks, kind in their feelings, unaffected and prepossessing in their manners; and in their dress and deportment in public, almost invariably shewing good taste, and native grace.

Let me here remark, that while many foreigners, particularly Englishmen, agree in praising *women* in Spanish-America, they are inclined to speak in a disparaging tone of the men. I think it unfair and unjust; and I think I could shew that personal vanity has too much to do with the relative estimate made. You must know a people thoroughly, and judge *impartially*, if you would avoid pronouncing a rash opinion emanating probably, from self-sufficiency; and a long experience has led me to the belief that the Spanish-Americans of the higher classes, are of an unaffected and affable nature, of much good breeding and urbanity, and of a great kindliness of feeling in their social intercourse, as well among themselves as with foreigners.

The ball was kept up with much spirit till two in the morning. I very much enjoyed the scene; for I there met and conversed with most of the

leading public men; and both pleasing and amusing I found them. I got into one little *coterie*, in the course of the evening, the members of which, made me laugh heartily with their witty sallies; and while thus engaged, another friend came up to me, and said aloud, "Do you know, Mr. Robertson, that you have got around you four ex-ministers, and a grave senator?" They all gave a droll look at each other, and became more jocose than ever.

Madame de L— announced, to the satisfaction of the assembled guests, her succeeding soirées for the first Saturday of every month, inviting all then present to favour her with their "*concurrencia.*"

LETTER XXIX.*

MEXICAN POLITICS.

Mexico, 12th April, 1851.

In judging of the character of Mexico and the Mexicans, we ought never for a moment to lose sight of their origin, nor of the religious, moral and political elements which they possessed, as a people, when they asserted their right to govern themselves as an independent nation.

The fact that Mexico was the spoilt child of Spain, the mother country, will go far to explain the miseries and misfortunes to which the ex-colony has been subjected, since it commenced to govern its own house. The colonial policy of Spain consisted a great deal too much in degrading the *status* of the creole; in encouraging his religious superstition; in restricting him to scholastic studies; without qualifying him to wield political

* See Note to Letter XXV.

power; in deadening his aspirations to fulfil the duties of public life; in emasculating his understanding; in tacitly conniving at his immoral pursuits, and in passively leading him to sink into vicious and degrading habits. All this was accomplished by a wickedly selfish policy on the part of the Spanish government, *not* of the Spanish people: and it was then cruelly alleged that the absence of all the requisite qualities towards enabling the Creole to take a part in the management of the state, was ample reason for his being carefully excluded from any share in the government of his own country.

In this system, the Spanish government was more or less fatally successful throughout its widely extended colonies, and most pre-eminently so in Mexico. Under the rule of the mother country, the Mexican Creoles were sunk into an abject superstition; were left to mean and frivolous pursuits; were unchecked in a career of immorality, and were constrained to breathe an atmosphere so impure, that many of the better tendencies of the mind withered away under its influence; so much so, that the Mexicans generally scouted the idea of making any positive sacrifice whatever to those

higher principles of our nature, which establish, both in our belief and our regard, a standard of public virtue. The public weal was a *beau ideal* to talk of—a metaphysical proposition to write about—and no more: public life was public selfishness, without any due moral restraint to keep it within bounds.

It was clear, therefore, that Mexico required a positive regeneration to be able to take her place among the nations; and it is painful to be obliged to confess at once, that if regeneration of public men has set in at all, the flow of the tide is as yet scarcely perceptible. Hence the deplorably low point at which the country stands; hence the territorial aggressions and spoliations to which she has been compelled ignominously to submit; hence the dilapidation of her public treasury; the venality of many of her public servants; her unpaid and accumulating debts; her universal misgovernment; her external as well as her *border* feebleness; in short, almost the approaching dissolution, if active remedies be not applied, of her social and political existence.

Many pithy illustrations could I give you of my melancholy reading of Mexican misrule, were that

necessary. But unhappily that misrule is too notorious; and it is neither my wish, nor is it within my province invidiously to pick out individual example, much less to wound individual feelings.. My ardent desire is to rouse the attention—to alarm the pride of all Mexicans who wish to preserve their name: to make them open their eyes to the fact that they are fast sinking as a nation; and to tell them, that if they do not rouse themselves from their lethargy—if they make not a steady and serious effort at regeneration—their days, as an independent nation, are numbered—that they will ere long be talked of, and thought of, as one of the things that *were.*

I need not point out to you, but it may be well to record for the benefit of the Mexicans, with the authority of a leading journalist,* that there are two or three ways in which a nation may rise. First. By a rational education of the people, teaching and inculcating right principles; struggling for the advancement of morality; encouraging true religion, by exploding the vain and worn-out forms of an antiquated superstition; and finally, by proclaiming to *all* classes, that

* The *Times.*

individual vice can only lead to national degradation. Secondly. By adopting liberal public measures; by repressing public abuses; by encouraging patriotic public men; by reducing the public expenditure to the public income; by rigorously denouncing public delinquents, and as rigorously punishing public crimes. Thirdly. By adopting a cosmopolitan policy, giving every encouragement to foreigners to trade with Mexico, and to settle in it, mixing their interests with those of the Mexican people, through a steady and well-regulated system of immigration, and through the introduction of foreign capital. Fourthly. By entering into the strictest alliance and the closest friendship with those nations whose interests are involved, to a greater or less extent, in the prosperity and nationality of Mexico.

I have already said, that the great power to which Mexico ought to look as her natural ally, is England. It is with England that Mexico ought to put forward every effort to draw closer and closer together the links of international friendship. I speak not as an Englishman—I speak as the friend of Mexico. The latter ought to appeal, in every possible way, to the sympathies, and

engage in every form the interests of the former, towards leading her to uphold the power, nationality, and integrity of Mexico. In point of fact, no nation is already so deeply interested in doing so as England, both in a political and mercantile point of view. Mexico is of high importance to Great Britain, and from no nation on the globe could the former draw greater and more material advantages, if she chose to seek them, than from England. She has no annexation views; and Mexico ought to seek her as a barrier, to oppose, on the part of others, this detestable and hypocritical mode of national robbery. This is truly an important, if it be not the whole, question for Mexico at present; while it ought assuredly not to be viewed with indifference by us politically, when all the bearings of the case are taken into account; and, indeed, I am so well satisfied of the importance of which *independent* Mexico is to England, that I shall more particularly enquire, in my next, into what ought to be the policy of the two countries in regard to each other. I am much mistaken if that enquiry do not strengthen the conviction, among those in England conversant with the subject, that the one nation ought to vie with the

other in hastening to cement the closest political union.

I have been looking into some of the ministerial reports to Congress, mentioned in my last. They contain many melancholy proofs of the present disjointed state of affairs here. The ministers, Gonzaga de Cuevas, of the Home and Foreign departments, and Piña y Cuevas, of the Financial, seem to have made up their minds, on the opening of Congress, to lay open, with an unflinching hand, the deeply-seated wounds of the commonwealth, as far as their parts (of course the most important) of the administration went; and they clearly shew how dangerous are the diseases of the body politic of Mexico. But I applaud their spirit, in looking fairly in the face the evils against which the nation has to combat. It is the surest way to cure those evils; and I therefore hope that, since the publication of these remarkable reports of the ministers, the Mexicans have been seriously pondering over the present aspect of their affairs.

The principal political event which has taken place here since I addressed you by the last packet, is the retirement of Señor Piña y Cuevas from the

ministry of Finance, and the nomination, in his stead, of Don Francisco Arrangoiz. This gentleman is said to have very high and honourable principles, but that his talents lie more in diplomacy than in finance. To make up for this, he is said to have much energy of character, and good general abilities. The task he has in hand is no easy one; and we have yet to judge how far he will accomplish it. In the meantime, the retirement of Señor Piña y Cuevas is generally regretted; and it is certain that in him the foreign creditors of Mexico have lost an able and consistent advocate. It is to be hoped that Señor Arrangoiz will faithfully carry out the policy initiated by his predecessor. I send you a paper of the 10th, the leading article of which is calculated to do much good here. I also send you Señor Piña y Cuevas's *exposé* of his financial course, including a justification of his measures, and winding up with the insertion of a letter from "the Mexican Commissioner," applauding the same, as far as they affected the foreign creditors represented by him.

The three millions of dollars of indemnification money due next month, are now pretty well spent; but I believe some part of what has not yet been

appropriated, will be applied to the payment of over-due dividends on Mexican foreign bonds.

The Congress, whose ordinary session closes on the 15th, has voted "extraordinary sittings" for thirty days more, and it will therefore be finally prorogued on the 15th of May. I am afraid they will not have that of which they stand in so much need—a member of the Senate to sum up the labours of the session, after the fashion of Lord Lyndhurst in the House of Lords. I was saying so to a humorous and somewhat satirical Mexican friend, himself a deputy, and he quietly remarked, that the summing up here was indeed a very simple task, and might be thus fulfilled by the "speaker":—

"Señores—Hemos ocupado muestras sillas por tantos dias—hemos recibido tantos Duros—El Erario ya no puede mas. Levantemos pues la sesion."—"We have occupied our seats for so many days—we have received so many hard dollars—the treasury is now empty. Let us therefore adjourn."

There are still a good many straggling parties of North Americans passing through this for California. They go in parties of tens, twenties and thirties; their long lank bodies on little Mexican

horses, their rifles across the pummel of their saddles, and their wide-awakes on their heads. They always seem to me to say to themselves, as they go out of the city: "Good by to you, Mexico, *for the present.*" In California, the rains have interrupted the golden harvest, but the work will recommence towards the end of May. Meantime, the accounts we receive represent the state of the Gold-seeking Society to be greatly disorganised.

Here public tranquillity is no farther interrupted, than in so far as on the great highways unhappy diligence passengers are concerned. They continue, as usual, every now and then to be waylaid and robbed with impunity. Hitherto these robbers have called themselves "Cavalleros," and they have generally been civil gentlemen of the road. But a French friend of mine was, the other day, not only robbed, but maltreated; and one person was so much bruised and wounded, as to be unable to come on to the capital. The robbers allege that they pursue this new system in self-defence, seeing that some of the public authorities had commenced shooting their comrades, when taken and convicted as highwaymen!

On the north, the Indians are giving trouble to the government on a larger scale; but we are promised a quick termination of this internal source of annoyance and complaint. I have little doubt, that, as in the case of Yucatan, the Indians are goaded on to commit excesses by ill usage. They are also excited to rise by lawless hordes of desperate villains, and convicted felons, who rove about in those distant quarters beyond reach of the feeble arm of Mexican law or government.

Before I conclude this letter, I think it proper to bring under your notice a fact, which, however, only constitutes part of a system very disgraceful to the English name, and which is naturally retorted upon us here, when we hold forth upon the smuggling system of Mexico. Her Majesty's ship of war, "Calypso," has recently left the West Coast of Mexico with about two millions and a half of dollars, from which the English Bondholders (for the duty is specially made over to them), ought to have derived a sum of about 150,000 dollars; and I have been informed, that as yet all the duty collected from this enormous shipment of specie, amounts to 113 dollars!

LETTER XXX.

"LA SEMANA SANTA."

Mexico, 13*th April*, 1851.

On Saturday, the 7th, the *Semana Santa,* or "Passion Week," came to a close; and although, after all that has been said about it, and so well said, I am unwilling to give you any very detailed account of this momentous part of the year in all Catholic countries, and especially in Mexico, yet I must not pass it over wholly without notice.

Jueves Santo, "Holy Thursday," is remarkable in one point of view; it is impossible to say whether it is most markedly *the* day of the year of the highest or of the lowest classes. The former pour into and occupy the streets and the churches during the whole day and night—the ladies all dressed out in the most gorgeous manner; and they are jostled and confounded, without doors

and within, by hordes of Leperos, by Indians, all squalid as usual, and by the poorer class of natives, *got up*, as well as they are able, for the occasion.

The ostensible business in hand is to *rezar las siete estaciones;* that is, to repeat their *Credos* and *Ave Marias* in seven churches at least—in as many more as the devotee chooses.

Again the churches vie in grandeur with the rich and fashionable class of the community. All the altars, niches, naves, and pillars of the leading places of worship are decked out with every conceivable sort of ornament; and albeit the *tout ensemble*, when viewed as such, has a splendid, grand and novel appearance, yet, when viewed in detail, it is, as in other things, Mexico all over—full of incongruities and contradictions. I suppose the serious is got up for the higher, and the comic for the lower classes.

But walk with me, and you will have a hasty glance of all the principal objects which met my view during the last three days of Passion Week and conclusion of Lent. The scenes, as I have said, have been so fully described by others who have gone before me, that, not to tire with

amplified repetitions, I shall bring into the compass of not many pages what, if it were novel, might be extended with advantage to two or three goodly chapters.

On Holy Thursday the streets are cleared of vehicles of all kinds, as well as of horses and every beast of burden, by ten o'clock in the morning. At that hour I sallied forth, and found the streets gradually filling with pedestrians. In half an hour more, all the main lines were swarming with every class and every age of the Mexican population. The church-bells had all ceased to ring; the monotonous noise of innumerable small rattles, made of wood and bone for the vulgar, and of silver with pretty devices and ornaments for the genteel, formed the only sounds that mixed with the hum of the dense crowds which paraded the streets.

The class of pedestrians which first and most powerfully attracted my attention, was that of the *children*—from the baby carried in the arms of the poor Indian mother, up to the young aristocrat of from six or seven to twelve years of age. Many of these latter looked, to all intents and purposes, like little angels. They were mostly dressed, if

somewhat for theatrical effect, quite splendidly, in the richest materials and finest colours. Many of the children, too, were really beautiful; and almost all well-looking. Descending gradually in the scale of rank, still the children were gaily dressed, according to their class. As that went lower, the dresses became more and more gaudy, but, for all that, striking in the effect. In the processions, Indian children were decked out as angels, according to the ideas of those who dressed them, the little heads being enveloped either in flaming pullicate handkerchiefs, garlands, circlets, or other adornments. The *infants* of the poorest Indians appeared as the usual appendage to their mothers' backs.

The ladies of *haut ton* displayed a profusion of splendid jewellery—were clad in velvets, satins, brocades, adorned with embroidery, lace, and the richest ornaments, the colours all decided, yet all in good taste. Never saw I so many elegant, sumptuous, and beautiful women parading the streets before. And according to their means and station, the whole of the females of the better and well-to-do classes showed themselves off to the best and in their best; while the males also, of corresponding grades, were

in their holiday suits. The commoner female class was dressed mostly in pure white, with more or less of embroidery—while satin shoes and the *rebozo* were, of course, the indispensable adjuncts of all. There were many country costumes to be seen, male and female; and they greatly added to the picturesque effect of the whole. Of Indians, male and female, there were crowds; for religious ceremonies are more dearly prized by them than by any other class. They, too, put forward what finery they could, although that was little; and, as usual, innumerable babies were slung at the backs of the bending and diminutive mothers.

Lastly, that large and never-missing class—the *Leperos*—just the same *Leperos* to-day as every day of the year—dirty tatterdemalions, with their dirty blankets or torn *serapes* thrown about them —were spread about in every direction. A day of supreme delight for them—and of profit, too —particularly in their never-ceasing vocation of pocket-handkerchief abstraction.

I moved with the crowd into the cathedral. It was fitted up and adorned for the occasion in the most elaborate, and, to a new-comer, in the most novel and incongruous manner. The various

lateral altars exhibited new saints, resplendently dressed; and the steps of the great altar itself were covered with a diversity of ornaments. Long rows of oranges, laid on tinsel; little vases with flowers, real and artificial; shrubs, candelabra; small decanters, with coloured water, *cum multis aliis.*

The cathedral was crowded. In the centre indiscriminately knelt all the females, gentle and simple. In the corridors, aisles between and against the pillars, sat, stood, or leant the men. A stream of in-comers and out-goers moved slowly and painfully round and round. The *leperos* were in great force, and every now and then I came upon one of them or on an Indian, standing beside, and almost touching some magnificently-dressed woman, who was sitting by a pillar. No distinction here—no fashionable pews, with a livery servant, loaded with elegant prayer-books, to go before and clear the way for Master and Missus, and the young ladies.

There were a great many "*elegantes*"—dandies, admiring the younger beauties as they knelt at prayer; and I fear there were not a few furtive glances from the *Letanias* to the lobbies—from the

Prayer-book to the pillars—from the saints in print, to the sinners in presence.

The religious ceremonials performed by a vast number of the clergy, covered with their gorgeous garments and dazzling decorations, aided further by the solemnity of subdued music from organ and well-trained voices, were very impressive.

From the Cathedral, I re-entered the square, and now observed that a great many booths had been erected, at all the corners of the square, and other places. They took the appearance of arbours, from the green leaves and flowers with which their fronts and counters were adorned; and it was pleasing to observe that no intoxicating, but only refreshing beverages were sold. All was sobriety and good humour.

I proceeded from the Plaza along the Calle San Francisco, and went into the great Church of that name, which was crowded to excess. The street, one of the best of the city, was, of course, filled with "Concurrentes," composed of all the classes I have mentioned. San Francisco is of great extent, and is divided into seven distinct chapels. They were fitted up with a more sober sort of magnificence than the Cathedral. "Before

the altar," says Madame C. de la B—, speaking of her visit to San Francisco on Holy Thursday—"Before the altar, which was dazzling with jewels, was a representation of the Lord's Supper, not in painting, but in sculptured figures, as large as life, habited in the Jewish dresses. The bishops and priests were in a blaze of jewels. The music was extremely good, and the whole effect impressive." The principal Church is very fine, and canvas paintings representing Scriptural subjects adorned the walls.

This Church is, par excellence, the *stand* of the Mexican fashionables, who line the entrance and court, viewing the fair devotees as they enter and depart, in pursuance of the day's religious observances. On my return homewards, I entered *La Profesa*, the really fashionable, and most elegant of the Churches, in a modern sense of the word. It was fitted up *à peu près*, in the same half gorgeous, half gaudy style as the rest, without presenting, perhaps, so many objects calculated for the *ad captandum vulgus*, as some of the others did.

In the evening I visited, among many others, the Cathedral, the Churches of Santa Clara,

St. Domingo, and St. Agustin, three more of the principal places of worship in Mexico.

The first is a comparatively small Church, but more chaste in its general character and outline than any of the others. It belongs to the Santa Clara nuns, who, from a gallery behind a grating, and consequently unseen, assist in public worship. They sing very nicely. The crowd here was very great, and the number of *léperos* present was surprising; the more observable, perhaps, from the fact, that the evening having turned out rainy, the higher classes did not by any means muster so strongly as in the morning.

Saint Domingo, and Saint Agustin (convent Churches) were in a blaze of illumination, and in both, the crowd of the middle and lower classes and *leperos*, was, owing to the damp and rainy weather, almost suffocating. The Churches themselves were decked out with a theatrical splendour which really astonished me. But as, after reading Madame C.— de la B.'s description of these Churches, I could scarcely avoid plagiary, let me, as a minor offence, avail myself, by quotation, of what she says of Santo Domingo.

"It looked like a little paradise, or a story in

the Arabian Nights. All the steps up the altar were covered with pots of beautiful flowers; orange-trees loaded with beautiful blossom, and rose-bushes in full bloom, glasses of coloured water, and all kinds of fruit. Cages full of birds, singing delightfully, hung from the wall—[these birds were wanting when I paid my visit]—and really fine (qu. *fine*?) paintings filled up the intervals. A gay carpet covered the floor, and in front of the altar, instead of the usual representation of our Saviour crucified, a little infant Jesus, beautifully done in wax, was lying amidst flowers, with little angels surrounding him. Add to this the music of Romeo and Juliet [I had the music of a still more modern composition] and you may imagine it was more like a scene in an opera, than anything in a church. It was the prettiest and most fantastic scene I ever beheld, like something expressly got up for the benefit of children."

The church of Saint Agustin had a much more sombre, grave, befitting, and religious look than any of the others. It was accordingly not so much frequented. Massive draperies deadened the illumination of the grave old-fashioned church, and threw a *chiaro-oscuro* about it. The figures of

those who visited it seemed rather to flit about than to press upon each other; and the *lepero* appeared to cast a furtive glance over the scene, and then to retire.

In Spanish America, perhaps more than in any other Catholic country, the great object of the administrators of the Church seems to be to render palpable to the senses of the multitude, through the medium of a *simulacrum*, however rude, not only every character and incident of the New Testament, but the tradition of many of those who have their appointed places, as saints, in the Roman Catholic calendar. In all the churches, accordingly, you have our Saviour and the Virgin Mary under every possible representation, particularly of suffering. Madame C. de la B— says, "Before each altar was a figure, dreadful in the extreme, of the Saviour, as large as life, dressed in a purple robe and crown of thorns, seated on the steps of the altar, the blood trickling from his wounds, each person devoutly kneeling to kiss his hands and feet."

"As I entered the door of this edifice," (Nuestra Señora de Loreto), says Mr. Brantz Mayer, "the first thing that attracted my notice was a side

altar converted into an arbour, in the centre of which was a *well*, with Christ and the woman of Samaria beside it. The lady had been fitted out by a most fashionable mantua-maker, in a costume of blue satin, picked out with pink; and while she leaned gracefully on a silver pitcher, resting on the edge of the well, our Saviour stood opposite in a mantle of purple velvet, embroidered with gold, and covered with a Guayaquil *sombrero!* (a broad-brimmed straw hat)."

One instance more of my own observation. When in Lima, many years ago, I passed Holy Thursday in marking the religious observances of the day. I came at night to one church, where our Saviour and the twelve Apostles, in wooden effigies, were seated at the Last Supper. The figures were all dressed out in full canonicals, a real *bonâ fidé* supper was laid out on the table, with bottles of wine and glasses; and into the mouth of Judas was stuffed a red Chili pepper, the Cayenne of the country. Let me add, in extenuation of this ultra display of material devotion, that all the viands and wine on the table were, on the close of the church, distributed among the poor.

Then, on Good Friday, not only in the churches of the City of Mexico, but in every one throughout the Republic, the Crucifixion, death, and burial of our Saviour, are enacted materially, the idea being to give a faithful representation, to the mind, through the eye, of the great and solemn event which is commemorated.

Although the same *outline* is taken up in every church and procession, there is a vast variety of modes adopted in filling up the picture, from general down to the minutest features. Where the latter are displayed, it is generally for the gaze and wonder of the vulgar, who must have nothing left to the imagination—no abstract description—but a palpable image set before them of their Saviour's sufferings,—the only sure way of rousing their religious feelings. It is not easy to go into the details of the religious observances in a highly-Catholic country, without offending both Catholic and Protestant. The former are accustomed to all the real paraphernalia of the imitative crucifixion, death and burial, and they consider conscientiously, that from the highest to the lowest representation of the same, as being so adapted to the various capacities of Roman Catholic

worshippers—from the purest to the grossest intellect—it is the best mode of preserving a religious feeling in the country. In a highly-Protestant country, the public mind not only shrinks from such acts themselves, but shudders at a bare recital of them.

I have, therefore, only to say, that in Mexico Good Friday is a day of mourning, prayer, fasting, and sorrow with all *good* Catholics, and that their outward demeanour and vestments correspond with their inward dejection.

The most striking part of the religious ceremonies of *la Semana Santa,* in Mexico, are the evening processions; and they are the great passion of the common people, and apparently acceptable to all ranks. To see those of Holy Thursday and Good Friday, you would have fancied that the whole population of the city was gathered together. The balconies and the windows along the whole line of the circuitous route were completely filled with fashionable people; and the crowd in the streets was dense and compact throughout. The *chiaro-oscuro* light thrown upon the innumerable costumes and figures, added much picturesqueness to the scene; and the full moon rising

brilliantly over the great cathedral, showing it in all the softened grandeur of its lights and shadows, was a truly splendid sight. The processions were of an immense length, and of the most imposing nature. That of Thursday consisted of what I may call an almost interminable succession of *tableaux*. The Virgin Mary, on a resplendent throne, and under a velvet canopy, in different characters; our Saviour, before and after the crucifixion; the Trinity; and the Apostles—all moved on, borne aloft on scaffoldings resting on the shoulders of companies of men. The dresses were of the richest kind, and the spaces between each *tableau* were filled up with the dignitaries of the Church, the monks of all the convents, *cofradias* or companies, laymen of rank, and others. Torches and tapers, wax candles and lanterns, illuminated the procession as it moved along; and the rear was brought up by a mingled crowd of devotees, male and female, with many Indian children dressed up in a fantastic but picturesque style, and accompanied by their admiring friends and relations.

Madame C— de la B— gives a very animated account of the procession of Good Friday; and as

I could only repeat badly what she says so well, I will condense her account of this closing ceremony of Passion-Week. To avoid repetition, I have myself omitted those particulars which equally apply to Thursday and Friday.

Our fair authoress saw the procession from the balconies of the palace in the great square; and she doubts "whether any other city could compete with it in the brilliancy of its *coup-d'œil.*" From her elevated situation she saw all the different streets which branch out from the square filled with gay crowds, hurrying towards it. Refreshment-booths, covered with green branches and garlands of flowers, were everywhere, and thirsty souls in and around them. All were in their gayest dresses, and they looked "like armies of living tulips." Here was a group of ladies, some with black gowns and *mantillas;* others, now that their church-going duty was over, equipped in velvet or satin.

"As a contrast to the Señoras were the Indian women, trotting across the square, their black hair plaited with dirty red ribbon, a piece of woollen cloth wrapped round them, and a little mahogany baby hanging behind," its head jerking, but with

the most resigned expression on earth. The respectable secondary classes were in smart white embroidered gowns, with white satin shoes, neat feet and ancles, and *rebózos* as usual. There were also "the peasantry and country women with their short petticoats of two colours," generally scarlet and yellow, their satin shoes, and lace-trimmed chemises; or bronze-coloured damsels all crowned with flowers, strolling along with their admirers, and tingling their light guitars. And above all, here and there a flashing *Poblana*, with a dress of real value and much taste, and often with a face and figure of extraordinary beauty, especially the figure large and yet *elancée*, with a bold coquettish eye, and a beautiful little brown foot, shewn off by the white satin shoe. The petticoat, fringed or embroidered, in real massive gold, and a *rebózo* shot with gold" completed in some instances dresses costing not less than five hundred dollars.

Then in the motley crowd were men dressed *à la Mexicaine*, large ornamented hats and serapes, or embroidered jackets; *leperos* in rags, Indians in blankets, officers in uniform, priests in their shovel hats, monks of every order—Frenchmen,

Englishmen, Germans, Spaniards. The venders of hot chesnuts and cooling beverages plied their trade briskly; a military band struck up an air from *Semiramide;* and the noise of innumerable *matracas* (rattles) broke forth again, as if by magic, while the sale of the Judases (fireworks to be let off next day, in the form of that archtraitor), again commenced. These hideous figures were tied together on long poles, and held up aloft.

"But the sound of a distant hymn rose on the air, and shortly after there appeared, advancing towards the square, a long and pompous retinue of mitred priests, with banners and crucifixes and gorgeous imagery, conducting a procession, in which figures representing scenes in the death of our Saviour, were carried by on platforms. There was the Virgin in mourning at the foot of the cross, the Virgin in glory, and more saints and more angels, St. Michael and the dragon, etc. etc., a glittering and innumerable train. Not a sound was heard as the figures were carried slowly onwards, in their splendid robes, lighted by thousands of tapers, which mingled their unnatural glare with the fading light of day."

On Saturday morning all is noise, bustle, and

rejoicing. Fireworks were let off in every direction. Salvos were fired—the bells rang as if they had been seized with a sudden attack of St. Vitus's Dance. Private carriages dashed about; and every *Simón* (such is the name given to the rumbling old machines which do the work of our street cabs), seemed to be engaged. The "Semana Santa" had closed.

LETTER XXXI.

POLITICS.

Mexico, 11th May, 1849.

I PROPOSE here to take a cursory view of what, in my opinion, ought to be the pervading principle of the international policy of Great Britain and Mexico.

The onward course of population in the United Kingdom, the increase of capital, and the almost feverish stimulus applied to British enterprise, make a wider and wider field of commercial intercourse not an advantage to England alone, but a *necessity,* pressing upon the country with an accumulative force, which extends *pari passu* with the growing population. Not to find adequate employment for our swarming millions—not to find vents for our multifarious objects of industry, is to sap the foundation of the empire. Insufficient employment leads from poverty and want, to

discontent, outrage, and insurrection. No one can deny the palpable fact; and therefore the first duty of a British statesman is, to provide new and advantageous outlets, both for our commerce and for reproductive emigration. With foreign states, almost entirely dependent on the manufacturing and shipping of other countries, a free intercourse cannot fail to bring the highest advantages to England, where the comparatively cheap rate at which she can provide the world with every object of manufacture, distances competition, and establishes for us a new market. If that country at the same time be thinly inhabited, it brings the additional advantage of readily absorbing a part of our surplus population. A daily augmenting taste and necessity for the produce of British industry, a partial amalgamation with the habits and customs of our people, and a gradual, however slow, advance in the science of good government, these all follow in the train of English immigration into young and still open countries. It is planting, without the expense of keeping, colonies of our own. Such a country as I speak of should Mexico be to England.

Of the imports of Mexico, I suppose three-

fourths are British; and a close friendship between the two nations would lead to such fiscal ameliorations in this, as would progressively, and to a wonderful extent, develop the resources and the riches of Mexico; and by increasing its power of consumption, would give elasticity to its commercial capabilities. A mutual confidence thus established, and a better government organised here, I make bold to say, that there is not a country on the face of the globe where England could lay out surplus capital so securely and so profitably as in Mexico. The working of its mines alone would give employment to millions of money and thousands of additional hands.

This mutual good understanding between the two nations would by degrees lead, naturally and inevitably, to a tide of emigration from England towards Mexico. The variety, but everywhere the beauty, of its climate is proverbial; and in mining, in agriculture, in pasturage, in the common arts, there is room in Mexico for ten times its actual population. Politically, and supposing the *entente cordiale* to exist, it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of Mexico, as an ally of England.

The *only barrier* against that colossal power

which threatens some day to shut out England *altogether* from this great continent would thus be raised.

Mexican independence, fostered by England, is more worth England's attention than all the influence she can possess on the old and worn-out theatre of European continental politics. To the *new* world, not to the *old*, England must look for a continuance of her due weight. And let her not say that this is a *premature* view; for, while she sluggishly looks on, others are advancing, by gigantic steps, to the goal of their ambition.

But if the advantages likely to accrue to England are great, to Mexico they are *vital*. The *entente cordiale* with England is the assurance to the Mexicans—first, of their existence as a people; and secondly, of their rapid advancement from their present low point, to their proper place in the scale of nations. Two great countries are deeply interested in the question of Mexico; but the policy of the one is to depress, of the other to uphold. It is the interest of the first, as a deliberate and systematic aggressor, to weaken and divide, in order to annex; the nobler aim of the second is, as a friend, to strengthen and consolidate.

The upas tree kills every plant which interferes with its growth—the oak spreads his branches to protect circumjacent vegetation. Let the two countries lay these truths to heart, while there is yet time to profit by them. Let them hasten to establish the *entente cordiale*; and then, while Mexico will have gained a powerful supporter, England will reckon on one of the most practically important of all her many allies.

The present state of the politics of Mexico forms a heterogeneous mass of conflicting parties, now coalescing, now changing, and anon "running a-muck" in a style which no one but a Mexican, and hardly he, can comprehend. Their movements work upon the head of a straightforward man as a hurdy-gurdy jars upon the ear of a refined musician. The moderates, the "puros," the Monarchists, the Annexionists, the Santanistas, all mix up in a *pot-pourri* which defies any clear separation of parts, and sets at nought every attempt at analysation. The present executive is an epitome of this chronic confusion. The President Herrera himself professes to be nobody, and the Minister of Finance has just turned out Prime Minister Cuevas. Then the former (Mr.

Arrangoiz), being a Monarchist, presents to the Chamber of Deputies, for their approval, Mr. Peña y Peña, another Monarchist, as new Premier. The Chamber snubs Mr. Arrangoiz, otherwise their pet, and refuse to have Peña y Peña. The Minister of Finance is then indirectly attacked by his colleagues, who present to the Camara a Mr. Lacunza, a lawyer, who is forthwith sworn in as Foreign Minister.

So matters rest now; but by next packet I may have to announce a totally different state of affairs. "Esto no puede durar"—says the phlegmatic politician of the Lonja (Exchange)—"This cannot last," and no doubt he is quite right. Not one man of the Cabinet, it is said, knows what his colleague is doing in the service or disservice of the state: each only knows that they are all plotting against one another.

In a word, the whole body politic—from the lowest subordinate up to the highest functionary (with here and there honourable exceptions)—is sufficiently rotten at the core; and we must exclaim with Hamlet—"Oh, reform it altogether!" To make "confusion worse confounded," there is the "federal system," which sits about as well on

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Mexico as a Parisian beauty's ball dress would sit on a Yorkshire bumpkin. Federation here is at once the most absurd and the most costly farce, which any set of political mountebanks could exhibit to the public. Fancy twelve or fifteen mock parliaments in the different provinces, now called sovereign states of Mexico! having all the expensive paraphernalia and machinery of so many independent communities! And imagine not that this *imperium in imperio* has anything to do with the better administration of public affairs in each particular province; for these free and independent states, which invoke "God and Liberty" to all their acts, are simply organised to provide so many more snug places for themselves, their families, and their hangers-on: an ultimate object, we must confess, pretty closely kept in view by politicians of all nations, not excluding our own.

But while I speak thus lightly of some of the "Mandones"—those who occupy the high places, do not suppose that the voice of the country at large is with them, or that they represent the feelings of all the Mexicans. There is a respectable party in the country, which embraces the thinking men, both in the higher and middle ranks—those

who have something to lose: men of real property, merchants, trading retail dealers—the rich and industrious classes. These observe with indignation and sorrow the misrule of the land; but, as things go, they are both afraid and ashamed to mix themselves up with the politics of the country. Were they well backed by a powerful ally, they would come forward and assert their right to an equitable administration of affairs. These are the men who would support, with heart and hand, an English influence and alliance, if England would take an active part in their affairs; but these, also, are the men who, if England step not in, will, in despair, submit to sacrifice their name and their existence as a nation at the shrine of a good, secure, equitable, and cheap government, even though coming from the people whom they dislike.

Congress is about to close its labours on the 21st instant; and when I seek, in my own mind, for some one, good, efficient, and large measure passed by them during their long sittings, I am as much puzzled as Diogenes was when in search of an honest man. In fact, if they were called on to make a statement of the legislative effects

which they leave behind them, their return would certainly be *nil.*

The question of the hostilities of the Indians and insurrectionists of the north continues to be discussed by the press, and loud complaints are made, that the authorities should still be unable to put down this servile war; but the fact is, that the "Indigenos" have little to do, as principals, with these scandalous aggressions in San Luis Potosi. It is a question of banditti and lawless hordes *on a large scale,* with which the imbecile local authorities are afraid to come into contact.

The public scandal of universal robbery on the highway seems to be on the increase. Not even when you take a ride of a couple of miles out of this city are you safe without pistols. The other day the diligence from Vera Cruz was stopped a very few miles from the town by a band of these robbers, and a poor American was shot. The occurrence was passed over as a matter of course, and I have not even seen it noticed in one of the many newspapers published. Here, of course, the general government has nothing to do with murders and robberies committed in any of the federal sovereign states, save that of Mexico Proper.

From the mining districts the accounts continue to be satisfactory. Letters from Tepic of the 28th ultimo, inform us that the "Oregon," U. S. steamer, had arrived at San Blas, from San Francisco, on the 21st, and sailed for Panama on the 25th. The "California" was expected at San Blas in a few days. H. M. S. "Constance" was cruizing on the coast, picking up freight, on which I presume the luckless bondholders will *not* receive the duty which *ought* to be paid, but which is *not* paid by the shippers. A sufficient number of vessels having arrived at Mazatlan and San Blas on the West coast to carry forward the crowds of Californian gold-hunters detained at those ports, and at Tepic, they had mostly taken their departure for San Francisco.

Although I now write on the 11th, our packet letters due on the 8th have not yet arrived; and in three days hence our letters must be sent off, whether we receive our correspondence or not. The arrangements are really vexatious. A packet established expressly for the convenience of the Mexican trade, is every day becoming more and more a nullity. We had letters on the 9th from

Havana, bringing English dates to the 22nd of March; and yesterday, via New Orleans, we had all European news up to the 7th of April, yet we have not our own packet letters of the 1st; and before we can answer them the packet may have taken her departure. As for any one who has studied the routes, thinking of going to England by a Royal Mail Steam Company's Packet, the case every day becomes rarer; almost all go by way of the United States. Let the Directors of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company remedy this evil if they would have the Mexican line be of any use to the public, or of any profit, through passengers, to themselves.

LETTER XXXII.

LIFE IN THE CITY OF MEXICO.

Mexico, 11th June, 1852.

My own time and attention are now so completely devoted to the advancement of my mission, that I shall here avail myself once more of some passing observations on our "visit," contained in extracts from H—'s journal, commencing 18th April. I omit such topics as I have already taken up myself.

"We had visits from Mr. Thornton and Mr. H—. The former and one or two other English gentlemen have lately got an *English* boat to row on the canal here; and as we rather quizzed the experiment, Mr. T. invited us to go next day to have a row, to which we agreed. But, being now in the rainy season, just as I prepared to set off, the water began to pour from above, preventing our excursion on the water

below. We have heavy rain almost every afternoon.

"In the evening there was a concert in the theatre, given by the *Deutsche Verein* here, for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital of this city. The lady singers were professional; the gentlemen, amateurs. It was very creditable on the whole; and although there were no solo performances, there were some good choruses and part-singing. The theatre was really worth seeing. It was well lighted, and decorated with flowers. Then all the ladies were *en grande toilette*, which has a beautiful effect when the house is well filled (as it always is on these grand occasions), the fronts of the boxes being so low, that nearly the whole figure is seen, and that to the greatest advantage. In one box there were four girls in a row, three of whom are acknowledged beauties, all dressed alike in simple white and chaplets; and the frame of the picture (*i. e.* the box) being, as it were, a wreath of flowers, you can imagine that the effect was most pleasing. In our box we had many visitors during the evening, which I spent very agreeably.

"29th.—On the 22d we had a drive in the

Paseo de las Vigas, which is always amusing; and I am sorry the season for it is drawing to a close. Yesterday Mr. Falconnet and my father accompanied me to the Paseo Nuevo, to which I generally go alone. What amuses me most there, is, to see the original manner of *greeting* which the fashionables here adopt. There is no such thing as gentlemen bowing; but, instead, an odd sort of movement of the hand, a gentle wave of the four fingers; whilst the ladies either do the same, or wave their handkerchiefs or fans.

"Mr. P—, one of the United States Consuls, whom my father had known in England, dined here yesterday, just arrived from California. He gave us many amusing and curious incidents of his travel. For instance, he told us that, on his arrival, seeing a man who stood idle, he asked him to carry his portmanteau to the inn, for which he offered him five dollars (a sovereign); 'And I'll give you *ten* if you'll do as much for me,' said the man.

"On the 30th we had all a pleasant drive to the Rancho de los Remedios, Tacubaya, and thence we went to a very large building, the palace of former archbishops, but now used as a sort of barrack.

It is consequently in disorder and dilapidation; but situated towards the top of the Barranca, or hilly ground, it commands a splendid view of the valley of Mexico and surrounding mountains. A Mexican party, friends of Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh, joined us at the palace; and two very good-natured and pleasant girls, gave themselves up for the time, to my advancement in Spanish. Every one is extremely kind with me in this respect.

"On the 6th May, Madame Levasseur gave her second ball, which went off with great spirit. There was plenty of dancing, and some very excellent amateur singing; and Miss A— particularly distinguished herself, having a beautiful voice. Madame Levasseur, as the presiding genius of the night, carried everything with éclat.

"9th May.—Yesterday we went at last to see the English boat, Mrs. Mackintosh, Mr. T. M—, Mr. F—, and I drove down to the canal. Mr. M—, Mr. B—, and my father went on horseback, and rode along the canal bank, whilst we got in and were rowed by four of the gentlemen owners. Mr. M— and my father ere long turned back, the road being very bad, with every now and then deep ditches. Over the first they coaxed their horses,

but at the second they failed. Mr. B—, however, being of a somewhat impetuous character, got over it, and reached the third, through which he plunged, and had just reached the top of the opposite side, when the horse stumbled and floundered, and Mr. B— was left in the ditch, not without danger. Luckily he was not hurt; so, although wet and covered with mud, he got into the boat—one of our gentlemen, Mr. T. M— volunteering to ride the horse home.

"We now proceeded to the celebrated *Chinampas*, or floating gardens (which, in our school days, astonished our weak minds); but they are now decided *fixtures*, although still pretty and novel in their appearance. Altogether our excursion was a most pleasant one, notwithstanding heavy rain in the course of it.

"Five P.M. 11th—I was sitting this morning, quietly copying a letter for 'the Mexican commissioner,' and trying not to think of the packet, when, hearing the sound of a horse briskly entering the *patio*, I rushed to the window, and saw Mr. T— on his 'Frison,' giving a large packet into my father's hands. 'Beraza has arrived—there are your letters'—said this kind friend—and

having soon after received *my* share of the spoil, I have been busy with it ever since.

"On the 15th, we called on our friends the Robles. Poor old Mr. R. died about a week ago, and the custom here being for all friends and acquaintances to call during the first nine days after a death, the family is occupied in receiving visitors during that period. When we entered the room there were several visitors, all in mourning, and as silent as possible. A slight remark, now and then, in a low tone of voice, was alone to be heard. But Miss Robles detained us till the other visitors had retired, and then in a pleasing, subdued manner, entered into conversation with us.

"On the 16th, we went to see the Tobacco Establishment, which is very interesting; but the account of which I leave to my father.

"Thursday, the 17th, being the last day of the Paseo de las Vigas—it is called the '*Combate* de las Vigas'—the last struggle, as it were, of this popular amusement. So we made up our little party for it. Mr. F— went with me, *en coche*; and Mr. B—, Mr. T—, and my father accompanied us, *à Cavallo*. The scene was animated and exhilarating, for the *paseo* was crowded in every part—

the canal, the footpath, and the carriage-way; and I enjoyed it much.

"On the 21st, we went to the palace, to see the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, as 'Parliament' was to be prorogued that day by the President. His principal aid-de-camp received us, and showed us all over the state apartments, some of which are really handsome. He told us that the senators and deputies were likely to sit longer than had been expected, and meantime he offered to show us the garden, called the *Botanical* Garden. It is pretty enough; but the one remarkable thing in it is the *Arbol de la Manito*, or hand-tree, of which it is said there are only three in the republic. It bears a flower exactly the shape of a hand, and hence its name. The old gardener, who was delighted with the interest we took in his various flowers and plants, promised to let me know when the *Manito* was in flower, which I told him I was very curious to see. Mr. S—, the President's aid-de-camp, gathered a beautiful *bouquet* for me, and then we returned to the palace, to await the 'closing of Parliament.' While we were again poking into the different *salons*, we somewhat suddenly came upon an elderly gentleman, dressed in

a grand military uniform, whom the aid-de-camp introduced as His Excellency the President! We bowed, and General Herrera begged us to take a seat in his *salon*. The ceremony of the closing was to have taken place at one, and it was now half-past two. So my father remarked that at that hour he thought it would have been at an end. 'So did I,' said the President, with the greatest good-nature; 'but no doubt those gentlemen (the legislators) have a good deal of business to get through with, and I am waiting here till they send for me.' While we were exchanging compliments, and about to retire, the message that 'All was ready,' came, and so we dispersed. Of the chambers you will probably have another account; they are plain, but handsome. What amused me most, when we visited them *before* the prorogation, was to see the *leperos* in the gallery appointed for the public, listening to the debates with the most profound attention, and apparently deepest interest! But where can you go in Mexico without falling in with some of these worthies?

"On the 22nd, Mr. Buchan, the manager of the New Real del Monte Mining Company, dined here, a very clever and agreeable person, who kindly

invited us to go and see the mines, and to pay a visit to his wife and himself, which we readily promised to do.

"The 24th being the Queen's birthday, the gentlemen dined at the British Embassy.

"I must now tell you that at Whitsuntide every year there are three days' fête at a handsome and picturesque village called *San Agustin de las Cuevas*, about ten miles from the city, and where several of the good families here have handsome country houses. Among the rest our kind friend, Mr. Escandon, who invited us, with Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh, to spend *the* three days at his house. Mrs. M., being unwell, could not go; and as there were no ladies in the house, I proposed only going on the last and principal of the three days."

So far H—; and as she did not go to St. Agustin till the 28th, I must give you some account of the two previous days.

Which may be the strongest passion of man's heart I will not pretend to say, but I am sure the passion for *play* is very deeply rooted in our evil nature; and I think that, *par excellence*, the Spaniard is, of all European people, the most generally addicted, if not the most passionately devoted to, play.

The seed has lost nothing by being transplanted to the Americas.

The fêtes of San Agustin in Mexico are, beyond any others I have heard of or witnessed, the most celebrated for gambling. All the world is occupied in the city a considerable time before the fêtes commence in making up their book—in *their* fashion—that is, in acquiring, by hook or by crook, by the needy, and in shadowing forth, more or less, by the well-to-do and the rich, the share they are to stake respectively in the three days sober madness of San Agustin. As I was busy putting up some correspondence for the Vera Cruz post, H— dashed into my room to say that Mr. Escandon was waiting to whirl me off to San Agustin. At the door stood the *caratela* or phaeton, a very elegant and light one. It was drawn by two superb "frisones"—very large, fine North American carriage-horses. Mr. E. had the "ribbons" in front, with Mr. F—by his side; Mr. Mackintosh and I occupied the body of the carriage; and away we drove in first-rate style. Three mounted servants accompanied us, and they had under their charge our saddle-horses. The drive along the level road, from Mexico to San Agustin, five

leagues distance, is not only, in general, beautiful, but, in one particular part, remarkable and unique. As you advance, your eye dwells on a succession of the best farms in the valley; extensive meadows, divided into sections by splendid rows of the universal *fresno* (ash-tree), and covered with cattle; well-cultivated fields, principally of wheat, and extensive plantations of the Mexican aloe, or algave; and, every here and there dotted with farm-houses and villas, the whole road is diversified and agreeable.

At about four leagues from the city, we passed the splendid *Hacienda de San Antonio,* and close by is the toll, where a heavy tax is levied on all vehicles, with the romantic view of some day or other repairing the roads with the proceeds.

Another very curious object pointed out to me was, from one great trunk two different trees, with wide-spreading, strong, and perfectly developed branches, quite beyond any other graft I ever saw.

The *remarkable* part, of which I have spoken, is a long volcanic track on one side of the road called the *Pedregal,* or stony place, presenting an irregular stony surface, mixed with lava, in naked sterility, and which continues on from San Agustin

over a succession of volcanic hills and elevations, reaching the celebrated mountain of Ajusco, which lies on the road to Cuernavaca. But this track —this strange interloper in the beauties of the valley between Mexico and San Agustin—has a very striking and novel effect.

We drove into and through the very pretty village of San Agustin towards sunset, and found quite splendid arrangements made for the three days' fête by Mr. Escandon at his beautiful country house, just on the outskirts of the village.

We sallied forth, about nine o'clock, to view the preparations made for the morrow, when Mexico was to pour her thousands into the great emporium of play, the Conclave—not of cardinals, but of card-players—the field of battle, where ounces of gold, not ounces of vulgar lead, were to determine who were the victors, who the vanquished.

The great banks were all in order, and twenty to thirty thousand doubloons, as the van force of the bankers were ready, with a reserve, to meet the attack of any amount of (gold) metal of all the great guns from the city, brought up to engage in the mighty battle of "*Monté.*" The bankers are "all, all honourable men;" and nobody thinks, for

a moment, that there is the slightest impropriety in capitalists opening a gaming-house for three days every year in San Agustin.

Some may think it an improvement on former times, others *did* consider it a most unnecessary innovation, that the executive government — president, ministers, staff and functionaries — were not this year transferred, bodily, from the palace in the city, to the mansions of *monte* in San Agustin. General Herrera and his ministers set their faces against government-gambling, *ex officio*.

The "banks" are established in the best houses. I was told that on one occasion, one house had been let for the *monte* week for 1,500 dollars, or £300. At each of these great banking-houses, "all the delicacies of the season" were, throughout each day, *á la disposicion* of the gentlemen players.

Having inspected, then, these great "banks," we descended gradually in the scale. I was conducted to a bank where *silver* (that is, *dollars*) was allowed to be placed on the table. This might be said to represent the "middle class," substantial and comfortable, without that air of

aristocratic luxury which the great banking-houses display. Again we descend a step, and come to *pesetas* and *reales*—silver still; but now somewhat rough in the appointments. At length we come down to *medios*, the lowest silver coin, and *clacos* (penny-pieces): these may be called the banks of the tatterdemalions. They were held in booths in the square.

I visited these booths next day, when they were in full play, as being certainly the most entertaining, and to a stranger the most original part of the *fiestas*. I found that the heaps of copper on the table were great, and so were the heaps of rags on the backs of the players. The torn blanket prevailed; and among the females (for there was a good sprinkling of them) the costume, in many instances, was at once scanty and dirty. But it was a curious *melée*—various grades of the lowest ranks, various dresses, a truly motley crew, and requiring much time and space to individualise.

The morning, and indeed the whole of the day, of the 27th, the commencement of the *fêtes*, was indeed a busy one in San Agustin; and I can best give you, in a few words, an idea of the

scene, that it was a "Derby day" on a smaller scale than our own; the road and the arrivals being very much of the same kind. Towards the afternoon, San Agustin was crammed. It was a great fair, "a great gambling *fête champêtre*," as Madame C— de la B— calls it, where every one seemed bent on one purpose—that of thorough enjoyment and recreation.

I visited all the banks and gaming-booths; and one thing remarked by every one, and not unworthy of remark again, could not fail to strike the stranger—that, from the highest to the lowest of the gaming establishments, all was order, quiet, and perfect *sang froid;* whether losing a thousand ounces on a turn-up card, or backing with a handful of *clacos* the favoured suit, you could never tell, by the looks of the players, whether they were winning or losing.

I must here state to you, that Mr. Escandon entertained his party (a dozen in number) in first-rate style. Nothing could exceed his hospitality; nothing the very handsome manner in which it was carried out. Then his large and really beautiful country-house, which stands in the midst of a garden filled with the finest of roses,

and of every other sort of flowers, of shrubs and of trees, afforded more than ample room for all his *recherché* and perfect arrangements.

There was something so truly characteristic and original in these San Agustin *fêtes*, that I felt quite sorry H— had not witnessed their commencement. I resolved, therefore, that she should be out the second day, instead of only the last; and I shall give you her impressions and observations on what she saw and did. On the evening of the first day, continuous torrents of rain fell, which interrupted some of the diversions; but the rainy night was succeeded by one of the most lovely of Mexico's lovely mornings. The beauty and fragrance of the roses glittering in the early dew, were enchanting. I culled *one* rose to show to H— as a specimen—one than which even our own England could produce nothing more exquisitely beautiful.

At six o'clock, A.M., all was bustle—servants hurrying about with chocolate and brushed coats, shining boots and jugs of hot water. Grooms were saddling for the *cavalleros*, and harnessing for the carriage-drivers. Guests were calling for Juan! Geronimo! Ventura! and the various sounds within

were mixed with the neighing of the impatient steeds without. At half-past six, A.M., we started for Mexico; and thus H— relates the second part of the *Fiesta de San Agustin*:—

"On the evening of the 26th, Mr. E—'s party for the occasion began to find their way out; and he himself drove Mr. M—, Mr. F—, and my father to the place of rendezvous in one of his *caratelas*. Some very amusing accounts of the '*fiesta*' are given by Madame C. de la B—, who, by the way, passed part of one in Mr. Escandon's house. All Mexico goes out of Mexico for the time being, leaving the city under the dismal appearance of a total desertion. I began almost to repent that I had not accompanied my father; for after passing one day in total seclusion, I had the prospect of another.

"To my no small surprise, however, I was awakened next morning by my father, who had come in with Mr. Landa, in his *caratela*, accompanied by Don Antonio Escandon on horseback, to take me out in the afternoon, an arrangement to which I very readily agreed. After a beautiful drive, we arrived at San Agustin at four P.M. Rain kept us to the house during the

afternoon, and at seven a splendid dinner was served up to a large company. After dinner all the gentlemen went to join the 'Monte' table, saving Mr. L—, Mr. F—, and my father who remained with me. So we had first music (a piano had been sent out for the occasion), and then a moonlight walk in the garden, which was a wilderness of sweets. None of the family having been in the house since the Americans had possession of the country, the garden had been neglected, although now overgrown with roses and lovely flowers of every sort; I never saw anything to compare to it. A fine clear stream of water, too, runs rapidly through the garden and grounds, and, now increased by the daily rains, its gurgling noise broke pleasingly in upon the stillness and silence of the moonlight night.

"Next day, being *the* day, we had several new arrivals to breakfast. Mr. R. G—, the Marquess de Raddepont (a most agreeable Frenchman), Mr. W—, Secretary to the American Legation, and Mr. G. M—.

"After another walk all over the charming grounds, a carriage driven by Mr. L— came round; a party of four of us, including, 'the

commissioner' and myself, got into it. We went through the village, and stopped at one of the gambling-houses, to see the wonderful game of 'Monte.' It was a pretty house, with a nice garden, and there sat rows of men with rows of doubloons before them, silent and orderly—no confusion or quarrelling; but the most profound attention to what was going on, was observed by every one present. Heaps of the gold ounces were now scraped into the 'bank,' now deliberately appropriated by winning players, and new heaps were transferred by losers from their stock on hand to the centre of the table, for the next venture, all with imperturbable gravity and *sang froid*. It is indeed most extraordinary to see the wonderful calmness with which the Spanish race win or lose large sums of money in this way.

"From the Monte Bank, we went to view the two most celebrated gardens belonging to the country-houses of this fashionable place. One was that of, I believe, the late General Moran, the most extensive and best kept. It was very fine and very large, laid out more in the French than in the English style.

"On our return, I retired to read in a pretty little summer-house in the garden, whence I was called by Mr. Escandon to meet some ladies who had come to lunch. These were the Misses L—, and a Miss E—, Mr. L—, the Spanish Chargé d'Affaires, with one or two other additions to our party, which had now swelled to a large one. Miss L—, who is considered one of the most musical young ladies in Mexico, sang very nicely to us. After their departure, I spent two hours quite alone in the house, seeing I was not to be tempted into the 'Plaza de Gallos,' either by the promise of a most splendid cock-fight, or of a most brilliant 'Concurrencia'; for although the ladies here will not now patronise a bull-fight, yet at San Agustin, once a year, all the élite and beauty of Mexico honour with their presence and gayest toilettes—a *cock*-fight.*

* Note by W. P. R.—Although I have not the slightest *penchant* for cock-fighting, and had never been but in one cock-pit in my life, on the principle of seeing every trait, if possible, of the customs and habits of a new people, I went to the cock-pit at San Agustin. I witnessed two fights out of the great number of the day; and these two were quite enough for my not over-strong nerves, where deliberate cruelty is the basis of amusement. Otherwise the cock-pit presented a curious and animated scene. It is a fine commodious circus, with rows of boxes rising from the ground circle, in which the operations are carried forward. To complete

"At five o'clock, with prognostications of rain, I went in a carriage with Messrs. E—, M—, F—, and B—, to the hill called 'Calvario,' whither at that hour of this particular day, all the world—at

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H—'s account of the San Agustin amusements, I shall here quote what Madame C. de la B— says of the cock-pit in 1840, when she visited it. With one or two slight differences, her observations were very much my own.

"We went to the *Gallos* about three o'clock. The plaza (or circus) was very much crowded, and the ladies in their boxes looked like a *parterre* of various-coloured flowers. But while the señoras in their boxes did honour to the fête by their brilliant toilette, the gentlemen promenaded round the circle in jackets, high and low being on the same *curtailed* footing, and certainly in a style of dress more befitting the exhibition. The President and his suite were already there, also several of the foreign ministers.

"Meanwhile the cocks crowed valiantly, bets were adjusted, and even women entered into the spirit of the scene, taking bets with the gentlemen, *sotta voce*, in their boxes, upon such and such favourite animal. As a small knife (it is scimetar-shaped) is fastened to the leg of each cock, the battle seldom lasted long, one or other falling every minute in a pool of blood. Then there was a clapping of hands, mingled with the loud crowing of some unfortunate cock, giving himself airs previous to a combat where he was probably destined to crow his last. It has a curious effect to European eyes, to see young ladies of good family, looking peculiarly feminine and gentle, sanctioning by their presence this savage diversion. It is no doubt the effect of early habit ..... unlike cock-pits in other countries (v. g. England) attended by black-legs and pick-pockets and gentlemanly *roués*, by far the largest portion of the assembly was of the first young

least that portion of it which can tear themselves from the fascinating 'Monte,' adjourn. There we found a very curious and motley assemblage of all ranks. We walked about a little—saw 'thimble rig,' or I suppose something very like it, and all sorts of race-ground tricks going forward. We admired the view from the top of the hill, and then returned to the carriage, whence I sat watching the arrivals, which was amusing enough, especially as the Señoras Mexicanas came out, 'positively on this occasion only,' in bonnets which were in great variety, and of course in French fashion. At six o'clock the dancing on the sward began; but whether it is going out of fashion, or whether the cloudy sky alarmed the

men in Mexico, and for that part of it, of the first old ones also. There was neither confusion nor noise, nor even loud talking, far less swearing among the lowest of those assembled in the ring."

When I attended the "ring," there were neither President nor minister present, a breach of custom which I very much applaud. What amused me more than anything were the *brokers*, who at once made and legalised, as it were, the bets. Many of them were of what we should call the "unwashed," but they did their business quite honestly, and brought lords and *leperos* into competition. "No offers refused," and "No questions asked," where the money was forthcoming, were the understood principles of the betting.

Señoritas, none of the higher classes ventured to 'trip it on the light,' etc. Be that as it may, I think, during the time I was there, I saw and spoke to *every one* of my Mexican acquaintances.

"We were a party of sixteen to dinner, which was more sumptuous than yesterday; and after a little music, and some first-rate Spanish comic songs from Mr. L—, we walked to the *Plaza de Gallos*, where the concluding amusement of the fête—the ball, was to be given. My father accompanied me, as did Mr. Escandon, and Mr. M—. We went to a box in order to look on, which is what the 'gente de tono' (fashionable folks) do. We had visits from all our friends; and at last, Mr. G. M—, having introduced me to Mr. H—, a young Englishman, I was persuaded to go down and have a closer inspection of the motley throng, which, indeed, was truly republican. But dancing, and 'hail, fellow, well met', were the order of the evening — so well attended, too, that we could not find room in the quadrille about to commence; and so we looked on. The company was very gay—dresses and classes of every kind—a *pot pourri*; but all the elements of which it was composed mixed up in the most kindly fusion;

all classes present, mingling for a moment into one. I danced a polka, returned to our box, and soon afterwards we left, thus concluding the varied and novel entertainments of the day.

"Next morning we all breakfasted early, and by and by, the whole party, some in carriages, some on horseback, quite a picturesque cavalcade, started for the city. The fiesta in San Agustin being over for this year, fortunes having been lost and won in these three exciting days—the people having all come to their senses, quietly returned to their every-day pursuits, as if these had suffered no sort of interruption. Fancy *my* seeing a man who had lost nearly £20,000, and this seemed to be thought nothing of!

"We had a delightful drive home, without fear of robbers, who generally swarm on this road, and once more quietly in Mexico, San Agustin seemed to fade from every one's thoughts, and looked to me like a dream."

LETTER XXXIII.

POLITICS.

Mexico, 11th June, 1849.

THE politics of Mexico, as now in the course of development, merit the attentive observation of the English nation and government. We approach gradually to the alternative of Mexican Independence, or American annexation; and a large portion of this people contemplate no distant day when they must gird up their loins to struggle for their national existence.

In looking at parties here somewhat closely of late, I have been endeavouring to ascertain the real value of the public press, and to what extent it either leads, or is entitled to lead, what little public opinion exists in the country. Seeing, therefore, how much England is interested in the impending struggle, I have thought it might

perhaps not be unprofitable, and certainly be curious to analyse rapidly the present state of parties and the public press in Mexico.

The metropolitan press enjoys a sufficient amount of liberty; but this does not extend in an equal degree to the various States of the Federation, notwithstanding the amplitude of the law which establishes free utterance of thought. The state governors and legislators are, in fact, so many petty tyrants, irresponsible in proportion to their distance from the seat of general government.

But, after all, the press generally does not exercise any great influence over the country: because, first, the number of readers is limited; and secondly, because the country is destitute of any decided public opinion, still more of any decided public spirit. Besides, the press, in general, is anything but luminous in its productions. The provincial, or federal press, is entirely occupied with purely local matters; while in the capital, public writers are busier in tenaciously maintaining personal and party disputes, than in enlightening the masses, or in discussing the vital interests of the nation.

The principal newspapers of the capital are:—

the *Siglo XIX.*, or "Nineteenth Century," which is not badly sustained, as far as temperate language and correct writing go; but it has nothing piquant to give it a relish. It is the especial defender of the moderate party. When Señor Otero, the great leader of the Moderados, was prime minister, the *Siglo* was ministerial, both on account of the intimacy subsisting between the minister and the owner of the paper, and because the latter was exclusively paid for the insertion of state papers—a lucrative job. Since Otero, however, has ceased to be minister, and the patronage of the government has been withdrawn, the *Siglo* is in opposition; all the stranger, that Otero again aspires to figure in the cabinet, and that, under his shadow, his public organ works for the return of his best customer.

The *Monitor* does not professedly belong to any of the three contending parties—*Moderados* (Annexionists), *Puros* (Republicans), and *Monarquists*. The *Monitor* represents the breeches-pocket of the proprietor, said to be unscrupulous in gaining his ends. He defends the government when it subscribes for a large impression, and gives him its state papers as advertisements. But when

this patronage is withdrawn, or even when the subscription and advertisements are not regularly paid for, the *Monitor* makes a furious onslaught on the government. This print (as well as the *Siglo*) has its three first pages filled with stale foreign news, and generally unreadable articles—the fourth page being reserved for events of the day, mixed up with tit-bits of scandal and personal attacks. It is, by the way, a curious prerogative of the Mexican press, that only the fourth page and the *feuilleton* of all the papers are read by the Mexicans generally. The fourth page contains all the chit-chat. Go into a *café*, and you will see all the Mexican world at the fourth page of the paper, and no other. The *Monitor* being always pretty well charged with *on dits*, the subscribers are numerous. In all countries folly preponderates; but here scandal is the principal aliment of news-mongers. Those who take pleasure in serious or instructive reading are the exceptions, and not the mass.

El Universal represents the Monarchical party, and is edited by men of education, and of infinitely better principles than those professed or acted on by the parties connected with the *Siglo*

and *Monitor*. In *El Universal* are found articles of general interest, or of an instructive character.

But then the *Universal* is high church, intolerant in its principles, having a clear tendency to a retrograde movement in politics, as well as in religion.

I come to speak last of the best-conducted paper in the metropolis, and the most useful to the Mexican community. This is *El Globo y Estandarte de Mexico* — the "Globe and Mexican Standard." Two months ago it was entitled simply *El Globo*, and it then was in favour of liberal or Puro principles; but having "pronounced" most energetically for a fusion of the monarchical and liberal interests against the Annexation, or moderate party; having entered most manfully on an advocacy of the nationality of Mexico; having preached "Union" against the domination of the "Yankee," it took in addition its patronymic of *Estandarte de Mexico*.

This *Globo* is edited by two or three gentlemen, of undoubted talent, education, and enlightened principles; but it advocates intercourse with the foreigner, and this is a mortal offence with a large proportion of the Mexicans. The other papers

take advantage of this senseless prejudice on the part of the people, and so the *Globo* is hunted down as "sold to the foreigner." But *magna est veritas et prevalebit. El Globo* is making rapid progress in its patriotic career: the Annexationists begin to tremble; and those who, hating American aggression, were yet most disheartened, are plucking up courage, and begin to believe that Mexico may still continue to exist.

In all other respects, the *Globo* is the cleverest of the Mexican daily press. Its information is good, its writing often vigorous, and it attacks abuses wherever they are to be found.

There are other papers published in the capital, but they are of an ephemeral character:—one comes out to-day, to fulfil some party view; another appears to-morrow, to satisfy a personal revenge; and then both sink into the tomb of all the Capulets. The *Periodico Oficial* is simply what its title indicates—a register of decrees and official documents, only defending, now and then, some particular Government measure.

Turning, then, from the press to parties, I may say, that the *Moderados* are the most insignificant as to numbers; but they reckon among them men

known for intrigue and cunning, who are either actually in power, or who rule unseen, through their influential position and secret councils: This is the party which concluded peace with the United States; and its principal members are secret advocates of annexation.

The monarchical party boasts of men of talent in its ranks. The influential class of the clerical body, as well as many landed proprietors and men of wealth, belong to it. This party now begins to believe it cannot immediately establish a monarchy in Mexico, in consequence of the actual state of Europe, and of the ground already gained by the United States; but they do not for a moment lose sight of their object. Meanwhile, to save the country from the Americans, and to vanquish the *Moderados*, they are disposed to ally themselves with the *Puros*.

These reckon among their number men of intelligence, but ultra in their democratic views. They are generally now without much property, and consequently their influence is accidental, and merely owing to their boldness. They, too, are disposed to lower their pretensions, in order to ally themselves with the Monarchists; for, even

more than the latter, they detest the *Moderados.*

If the Monarchists and *Puros* could compass the fusion which is meditated, it would ensure at once the downfall of the *Moderados,* and give a blow, for the present, to the hopes of the United States and the Annexationists. But, to say the least, the fusion is most difficult, from the absence of a *point d'appui,* such as would be afforded by a cordial union with England. They want some strong and direct impulse to give life to something like patriotism—to activity, to disinterestedness—some controlling power able to abate the conflicting views and interests which tend to alienate one from another.

What the country most pressingly wants is, to crush the federal system, which is rapidly destroying the liberties and consuming the public resources of the country.

With regard to the war carried forward in the northern provinces with the Indians, with whom are associated the very sweepings of the Mexican people themselves, I am sorry to say it assumes a more and more formidable appearance, breaking out now in one, now in the other province. A

sort of peace was patched up in the principal theatre of the war, San Luis Potosi, to be broken whenever it suits the views of the insurgents, and the aboriginal castes in alliance with them.

To my no small surprise, I have to tell you, that for thirty days the executive government has remained without any change in its *personnel.* Nevertheless, I make sure of a political *pot pourri* being dished soon; for the quidnuncs are all agog. The *Moderados* are indubitably losing ground; and I heartily rejoice at the fact; for you will observe, it is the decadency of the Annexationist influence.

Congress closed on the 21st ultimo, and is summoned for the 1st of next month. Its extra labour will be restricted to measures of finance, including a plan for consolidating the public debt.

Before rising, the Chambers passed one good law: they reduced the export duty on silver to 5½ per cent.; that is, to 2 per cent. internal duty, and 3½ per cent. on export. The former rates were 5 per cent. each—10 per cent. in all; a fruitful cause of smuggling.

LETTER XXXIV.

MEXICAN GOSSIP.

Mexico, July 15th, 1849.

My time and attention have been so completely engrossed with the affairs of my mission since the beginning of June, that I have not been able to go on with my journal satisfactorily. I propose, therefore, giving you two or three letters towards the close of my residence here, to embrace, generally, what I have yet to say on Mexico, its people, institutions, and various other matters. To the great object which brought me here, my mission on account of the foreign bondholders of this state, I shall dedicate one letter; and I hope to illustrate the leading branch of industry of Mexico mining—by the details of a visit which I propose making next month to Real del Monte—an establishment so celebrated in former years in England, and once more one of great public interest here.

In the meantime, I shall continue to re-produce H—'s notes of what she has seen and is still seeing of Mexican life, going on from the *fête* of San Agustin:—

"4th June.—My father offered to ride out with me next morning. Having had a horse for some time, and beginning to despair of the arrival of the 'Dean,'* I had got a habit made here—very inferior, in make and texture, to my own, but yet much dearer. So before seven o'clock in the morning I was actually on horseback. You can conceive nothing more delightful than these morning rides, with the beauty of the climate, freshness of the air, diversity of roads, and never-ending change of the finest scenery. We were joined, before we got out of the town, by the Marquis de R—, Mr. B—, Mr. T—, and Mr. H—. The exercise was exhilarating, and I enjoyed myself accordingly. We met many *cavalleros*, but no *ladies*.

"This was the day of the third of Madame

* A merchant vessel, by which I had shipped a piano, saddles, H—'s riding-habit, and sundry other things, and which, by a "singular coincidence," was *wrecked*, as well as our unfortunate "Forth"; and our goods and chattels went to the bottom of the sea.—W. P. R.

Levasseur's monthly balls, but which, from the indisposition both of Mrs. M— and my father, I did not attend. These balls are conducted with so much *savoir faire* and spirit, that they are forming an epoch in the fashionable records of Las Señoras Mexicanas.

"9th.—We have spent our time during the week in our usual way: many visits from our kind friends, and among them Mr. Piña y Cuevas, the ex-Minister of Finance, as well as one of the most agreeable of our acquaintances, a Mr. W—, Secretary of Legation (as I think I have mentioned) to the United States Legation. He has been Chargé d'Affaires here, and I dont know that they could have a better. He is intimately acquainted with everything Mexican, and his talent is accompanied by a wit and drollery which make him a favourite wherever he goes. I have been with Mr. and Mrs. M— to the Theatre, no longer the Opera; and I found that the drama here depended, as in England, a good deal on the French school. The comedy was a translation of one which I had myself seen in Paris.

"On the 6th we had accounts from England, by way of the United States, to the 5th of May, just

thirty days. We ought to have our letters of May by the packet on the 8th.

"We had an excellent sight of the Corpus Christi procession on the 7th; and that being a great holiday given up after the imposing ceremony to paying visits: we had our share of these, and passed the day pleasantly.

"9th.—We rode to Chapultepec, which I admired more than ever. It is the finest embodiment, if I may so speak, of the grandeur of Mexico, which I have anywhere seen.

"12th.—Our packet letters arrived this afternoon, when we had begun to despair of them. Mr. T—, on his grey, dashed in with ours, and at all times a welcome and agreeable visitor, you may guess he was not in an inferior degree, when he so kindly and considerately came to relieve our anxiety.

"15th.—Thanks for your feelingly expressed sympathy in our late perilous situation. I need scarcely say that I knew you would sympathise with us in so momentous an affair.

"I am getting quite accustomed to Mexican life, and I now like it a great deal better than I

did at first. I then felt the want of my accustomed exercise, the 'Kensington Gardens' of this place not only being at some distance from where we live, but inaccessible to a lady, except at early morn (for so fashion rules it), and then of course not as an *unprotected,* but as a protected female. Now, however, I go out on horseback every morning early. To-day I had a very pleasant ride to Tacubaya; and, although you could hardly call it the country, seeing it is not so far from Mexico as Bayswater is from the City, yet the road is somewhat different, as you may imagine, when I tell you that we were rather alarmed on discovering that the gentlemen had forgotten their pistols, several robberies having lately been committed on this very road.

"The mornings are so lovely here — the air so cool and clear, and the views of the mountains so fine—that I enjoy these rides above everything else. We go generally from seven to half-past eight, for then the heat (in the sun) begins to set in. I may mention here, that the coolness of the air, when not exposed to the vertical sun, enables the Mexicans (that is, in the city) to wear their clothes like other Christians; but in all the parts called

'*Tierra Caliente*,' they dress in *la Campechana*. I got a dress of that country, and will shew you, when we meet, that their contradiction of the received rules of dress has not a bad effect. I have not given up my bonnet, as I never walk, and in a carriage it is not much observed. The Mexican ladies who *only* walk to early mass, then sometimes wear a mantilla, or, as is more common, they put their shawls over their heads, this indeed being the almost universal costume. When driving they wear nothing on their heads. The lower orders wear the *rebózo*, a curious sort of scarf (made with the hand), dark brown or blue. This is put over the head, and the right end is thrown over the left shoulder, and thus forms anything but an ungraceful piece of dress. It is wide enough to reach to the waist, and is a sad excuse for laziness, as it completely envelops the upper part of the figure. The lower outward garment consists of a petticoat, which is generally white, from the waist to the depth of a quarter of a yard, the rest being of some colour. On Sundays the petticoat (or dress) is of beautiful white or coloured muslin. How artists must delight in this country, and how often I long for A— to be with me. There is hardly a

figure or object that would not do for a study. The miserable, sad-looking, toiling Indians,—their huts with the rose hedges,—the *lepero* with his indolent air,—the lower classes of men and women, —the *ranchero* (or farmer) with his wife clasped round the waist, as she sits before him on horseback,—the large canoes with their dusky passengers, singing, playing, and dancing lazily in the cool of the evening, all dressed in their best, and bedecked with the very gayest flowers (the roses being more common, they are neglected for the gayer poppy);—in fact, I must wait till I can explain to you by word of mouth, how the picturesque predominates here over the useful and common-place.

"The female part of the upper classes of Mexico, although not enjoying as yet a very liberal education, seem anxious to improve (many, for instance, cultivate the *English*, and most of them the French language), and they are very ready to see their own faults. They have a *savoir faire*, which conceals any deficiencies they may have, and a sense of dignity which makes their manners fit for any society; and, accordingly, they are perfectly lady-like, and very agreeable. Like most

of the daughters of Eve, as I suppose I must admit, they are fond of dress. In the morning, mass—in the forenoon, visits, chatting, music, standing in the balcony, or any other *pasatiempo* which offers; then dinner; after which they dress and go to the *Paseo*, where they drive up and down, bow to their acquaintances (and, of course, like all other ladies, criticise their *toilettes*); all are in *full* dress, *i. e.* bare arms and necks, flowers in their hair, and a scarf or shawl, such as we use in going to a ball, thrown over them. Of course, the fine warm climate has much to do with this dissimilarity from our own afternoon dresses. The ladies return from their drive at half-past six to seven — have their chocolate, and dress for the theatre or evening party (the former being the rule and the latter the exception), and in their boxes they receive visitors during the evening. On all occasions, the pleasing manners of the Mexicanas, their complete tact, and their conversational powers, naturally produce very great effect. Another of their customs, I may add, is that they always embrace each other when they meet, instead of shaking hands.

"I have omitted as yet to tell you that on the

13th of last month, we went to the Señora de A—'s ball. It was the prettiest one I have seen here. The *patio* and the stone staircase were nicely carpeted; the rooms, which are very handsome, were beautifully lighted; and the ladies were more richly dressed than I have yet seen them. The show of diamonds was splendid. White is the favourite dress for such occasions; but there is every variety of material, from satins, brocades, and blondes, down to the simple *tarletan;* and flowers are very much worn. All the fashionables of Mexico were present, and the whole thing was conducted in a way to impress one with a very high opinion of the good taste, as well as of the riches of the leading society of Mexico.

"On the 17th, having been invited by Mr. L—, we rode out to his house at Tisapan to breakfast—accompanied by four or five of our English friends. We had a charming ride, the scenery, most of the way, being diversified and picturesque, passing through San Angel at a distance of between two and three leagues from the city, and arriving about nine o'clock at the pretty village of Tisapan, about a league farther on. Mr. L— received us

very kindly, and presently took us through his garden, then by the banks of the stream, and at last to his *azotea*, whence the view is very fine; all to divert certain ravenous appetites from thoughts of breakfast, as he was still waiting the arrival of other guests. Towards eleven, Mr. L— began to entertain serious fears of a *pronunciamiento* by our now rebellious party, when happily two carriages drove up with the expected arrivals; and that most abundant and varied of all meals, a Mexican breakfast, was served up, to the contentment of our mal-contents.

"The walks about the sequestered village were truly delightful. In the course of them we sat down under a large mulberry tree, and there conversed with 'the oldest inhabitant of the place'—the owner of the tree and the adjoining cottage, an amusing old man, and although of a very advanced age, both hale and hearty.

"After our rambles, we returned to Mr. L—'s very pretty country house—had music (for bachelor as he is, we found a piano in the drawing-room)—farther refreshments, in the shape of a late lunch; and, in the cool of the afternoon, we enjoyed a pleasant ride home, after a delightful day.

"I must just tell you, *en passant*, that on the 20th we all went to a concert at the theatre, to hear the principal performer—a *black artiste*—on the violin, and which, considering he has been almost self-taught, he played very well indeed.

"Again, on the 23rd, we went to see a German conjuror, yclept Herr Alexander, who performed some very clever tricks; among others, Houdin's celebrated one of the boy suspended in the air.

"We have now got into the rainy season, which is so far unpleasant, that we fear we may not be able to get out much. It is curious to see the regularity with which the rains fall. They commence about three or four o'clock in the afternoon, and last for two, three, or four hours; and it rains so heavily that many of the streets become impassable, and one cannot ride out on account of the muddy roads. Yesterday we had such a storm! —thunder and lightning, with rain, which fell in torrents, the like of which I never saw before. Our rides, however, are always in the morning, when, although the roads are often bad, there is no rain. There is nothing here from which I derive so much pleasure as from these rides, notwithstanding the early rising; but six o'clock

in the morning here is quite a different thing from the same hour in London.

"The town is on the *qui vive,* on account of the arrival of Madame Bishop and Bochsa, who are about to enliven the fashionables with a series of concerts.

"5th July.—We dined with Dr. and Mrs. Martinez del Rio, who had a very pleasant party, all acquaintances of our own, including Don José Martinez del Rio (our host's brother), whom we had the pleasure of knowing in England. We spent a delightful evening. Both Dr. and Mrs. M— are very musical, and they played duets on piano and violin, in a manner far superior to the general performances of amateurs; while the fair Señora sang charmingly many prètty Spanish songs, as well as Italian and others. She is a most pleasing person — young, pretty, and accomplished — of Spanish and Italian descent; yet more French than either. Reconcile this, if you can! Mrs. M—'s father was Italian, her mother was a Spanish lady, and she herself was educated and lived (till she was married) in Paris.

"7th.—We all went to the monthly ball at the French Embassy, which went off with the usual

éclat, and which I enjoyed accordingly. Indeed, the *réunion* was so agreeable—all so nicely managed both by Monsieur le Ministre and Madame—that we did not leave till two in the morning. So, instead of being up at six, as usual, my father had actually to awake me at ten, by throwing my packet letters into the room! No event brings such interest with it as the packet! I could do nothing till I had read all my letters; and then, having made my *toilette*, I joined Mr. F—, Mr. B—, and my father, who, in the library, were deep in the European news; and so much had we to talk about, that, to my surprise, three o'clock struck when our friends retired. So quickly had the hours flown past!

"On the 9th, Mr. M— gave a farewell dinner, on the occasion of Mr. Falconnet and the Marquis de Raddepont leaving Mexico. It was a most agreeable party; it included Mr. T—, of our legation; Mr. W—, of that of the United States; Sir J. L—, and Mr. Beraza. I need hardly tell you that we spent a pleasant evening."

PART IV.

REAL DEL MONTE.

LETTER XXXV.

REAL DEL MONTE.

Real del Monte, 18th August, 1851.

At noon of Monday last (13th), I finished my correspondence for the packet, and walking over to Beraza's house, found him packing his mails, and about to take his departure for Vera Cruz.

On Tuesday, I was busy preparing for our trip to Real del Monte, writing about my mission, and taking leave for a week of my political antagonists, through the medium of the newspapers; and with other matters. We were obliged to be stirring—with a lady in the case, no small affair—at five A.M. the next morning. At the coach-office, we found Mr. Escandon and Mr. G—, our fellow-visitors to Mr. Buchan; and at five minutes past six, we were all in the *diligencia*, rattling over the stones of Mexico, *en route* for Real del Monte.

The morning broke beautifully clear and warm, and away we sped, all in good spirits. Don Manuel Escandon, I consider one of the most agreeable men in Mexico. I never knew any one so completely *desprendido,* "unassuming," although having indubitable claims to pretensions of a high order. Amiable and kind-hearted; talented, travelled, a man of the world; in short, a first-rate travelling companion, Mr. G— is a congenial spirit, and high in the general esteem.

We had scarcely got to the end of our first stage, when an alarm was given that robbers were on the road! And we were all unarmed! Mr. G—, thought he had a pocket pistol; but, on drawing it out, it proved to be a flask of Cognac! The fact is, that Wednesday was the feast-day of *Nuestrà Señora de la Asuncion* (Assumption), which is always kept as a high day and holiday at Pachuca, a little town at the base of the mountainous ridge on which Real del Monte lies; and on all such occasions gamblers go from Mexico, carrying with them a plentiful supply of doubloons for their banks at *Monte.* So the robbers, it was said, were on the road, looking out for the

jugadores (gamblers) bound for Pachuca by the *diligencia*.

Now three out of four of these gentlemen had taken places by the *diligencia* by which we came; but not arriving at the booking-office in Mexico at the precise moment, Don Manuel, knowing their vocation, and not liking their company, insisted on the coach starting to the hour, so that two of the speculators in cards were left behind. Meantime, the peril seemed imminent, that Messrs. Escandon and G—, with myself, would be mistaken for the Monte bankers, and maltreated for not giving up doubloons, which we had *not* in our possession.

Under these circumstances, we held a council of war at the first post-house. We there found a loaded pistol, and an unloaded rusty carbine—no powder or shot being at hand. So Mr. Escandon had a tall, stout, young fellow, belonging to the post-house, mounted on a fiery steed; the unloaded carbine was slung conspicuously across his saddle-bow, and from his girdle projected the butt-end of his horse-pistol. We then set off, our man-at-arms, thus accoutred, careering and caracoling in front. I put my watch and chain in my

boot; H— hid her's; and Don Manuel, and the one *jugador*, who was with us and not a little uneasy, stuffed their gold and silver into the linings of the *diligencia*.

We looked for the attack in traversing a long, deep wood, through which we had to pass. But whether the robbers, like the gamblers, missed the *diligencia*, or whether, hearing there were *Ingleses* as passengers (a class they are not fond of attacking), or whether it was altogether a false alarm,—the fact is, we passed through the wood, and the robbers did not appear.

The road to Pachuca stretches through the plain of Mexico, now made specially verdant by the periodical rains. The splendid mountains which rise in every variety of shape beyond the verges of the valley, and form a noble amphitheatre of nature, lent much grandeur to our drive; whilst lights and shadows cast upon them by the sun, crossed every now and then by a fleecy cloud, heightened the charm, by giving a constant variety to the view.

We breakfasted, *à la Mexicaine*, at a little village (I forget its name), and the dishes provided — *guisados*, *frijoles prietos*, *chile rellenos*,

huevos revueltos, sopas, and other delicacies, were done justice to by all, save by H—, who pronounced against the grease and the garlick, and confined herself therefore to tea (brought by Don Manuel), and *tortillas.*

Towards the afternoon, we were overtaken by two or three of those sudden and heavy showers which fall at this season, and which diversify the appearance of the landscape not a little. We arrived at half-past three at Pachuca, the resting place of the *diligencia.*

Pachuca lies at the very foot, almost in the *faldas* or lap of the mountains, which are here well wooded; while the trees in the valley display a rich foliage, amidst a vegetation everywhere luxuriant. Here, however, as almost everywhere in Mexico, the want, to complete the scenic effect, is that of water. Pachuca is picturesquely situated, as you may imagine; but it looks best at a little distance, many of the small towns of Mexico, as far as I have seen, being somewhat mean in their architecture, often dirty, and as often with a look of decay.

When we alighted from the *diligencia,* we found an open carriage, a very well-constructed one,

belonging to Mr. Buchan, with four jet black, large, handsome, and sleek mules, waiting to take us to Real del Monte. It was a double phaeton, called here a *caratela*. A sumpter mule took our luggage. H— and Mr. Escandon occupied the body of the carriage; Mr. G— and I took the front seat or dickey, and the postillion mounting the near wheeler, we set off, commencing from the very door to mount the acclivities.

From the moment you commence ascending, you behold the wonders and beauties of Real del Monte,—I mean the wonders of English enterprise, and the beauties of nature. The Spanish-Americans are proverbial for their bad roads, and their *no* roads; and, in this respect, Mexico is no better than her sister ex-colonies. The road between Vera Cruz and Mexico has perhaps had most pains bestowed on it; but you have heard how we were jolted there.* And in mountain districts, thinly inhabited, almost all the tracks and by-ways are dangerous, many of them all but impassable for a mule, and not a few only fit for laborious foot transit.

* Let honourable exception always be made of the road between Santiago de Chili and Valparaiso, constructed by O'Higgins, the Macadam of that country.

Judge, then, of your surprise, on leaving Pachuca, to enter on a beautifully Macadamised carriage road, winding or zig-zagging among what would be termed in England, mountains. In point of fact, we rise two thousand feet from Pachuca to Real del Monte; and this road, from the one place to the other, you find parapeted at the innumerable, small, intersecting ravines, by solid and handsome mason work, rendering the whole line an uninterrupted carriage way, with an almost imperceptible gradient, so that the mules cantered along as if they were travelling from London to Brighton, before the days of the rail! You have constantly the deep ravines on one side, and the peaks of the mountains on the other. The levelling of the surveyor has been so carefully and so skilfully done — the road winds from mountain to mountain, rounding the ends of the ravines so ingeniously, if I may so speak,—that, as you advance, you look east, west, north, and south alternately.

And what scenery! The mountains, from their tops to their bases, clothed with timber trees, shrubs, and brushwood, everywhere intermingling as usual with the wild flowers! Then, as you

gradually rise, and survey the scenes at foot, you have views of the valleys, luxuriant in their herbage and their crops, with here an *hacienda*, there some cottages, — Pachuca being the only town; and you see in the distance mountain overtopping mountain, the intervening ones, here and there, opening up views of plains, which stretch far and wide, till the whole component parts of the interminable vista are blended into one dark and undefinable mass!

Such is the character of the scenery till you approach Real del Monte, about ten miles from Pachuca. As you ascend the last eminence to enter it, an uncommonly beautiful conic hill rises before you, covered with larger and finer trees than the others, of a deeper green and thicker foliage. Around the base of the cone are large openings or swards, equalling in beauty the finest lawns in England.

Descending, we found ourselves at the back of the town of Real del Monte. The objects which first struck our eye were shingle-covered cottages, scattered on the side of the ravine, opposite to that which we descended, and three or four tall brick chimneys, rising above the mass of buildings which sur-

rounded them. As we advanced, the irregularities of the town became more distinctly visible, the houses being clustered on different hill sides, which formed, however, a continuous ravine, and showing, from the bottom to a variety of eminences, buildings jumbled about, here isolated, and there forming two irregular and curious-looking lines, the principal, I may say the only, street, which, from one end to the other, twisted itself through the town. At length, after much ascending and descending, we came to the parish church, when, turning sharply round, we presently found ourselves in Mr. Buchan's *patio*, just as the sun went down.

Our host received us most kindly; and, indeed, I myself having seen him three or four times in Mexico, and met him at Mr. Mackintosh's table, we were old acquaintances. In the drawing-room we found Mrs. Buchan—young, handsome, and of particularly prepossessing manners; and she was equally cordial with her husband in welcoming us to Real del Monte. With Mrs. B— we found Miss C—, who had preceded us on a visit to her friends at the "Real."

Towards seven we were all drawn round a cheerful blaze (within the tropics and in the

middle of summer!) in the drawing-room, whence we adjourned to the dining-room, also well heated by a good fire; there, seated round the hospitable board, we did ample justice to a capital dinner, and afterwards spent the evening in great hilarity.

Mr. Buchan is of a good Scotch family, but an Englishman by birth and education. He is full of vivacity, good-nature, and talent, — a most agreeable as well as instructive companion. He was educated at the Royal Military Academy of Woolwich, along with other cadets intended for the Artillery and Engineers. Had he, indeed, continued in the army, he would by this time have attained the rank of field-officer. But coming out here in 1825, he gave his valuable services to the Real del Monte Company; and he has since continued to devote his energies, which are untiring, and his great capacities, to mining pursuits. Mr. Buchan's large household is admirably arranged, and his kindness and hospitality are quite proverbial. As director of this great mining concern, he receives a thousand a year, with five hundred a year more as table allowance. His management, in every particular, may emphatically be pronounced *first-rate.*

Mrs. Buchan is a lady whom to know, is at once to esteem and admire. The beauty and animation of her countenance are a happy index of her lively disposition, her warm heart, her good sense, and her cultivated mind. Mrs. B. was also born of Scotch parents in London, her father, Mr. Auld, having long held the Secretaryship of the Scottish Hospital, and some other appointment, from both which he retired a few years ago, respected by all who knew him, to the honourable enjoyment of a "green old age."

LETTER XXXVI.

REAL DEL MONTE CONTINUED.

Real del Monte, August 1849.

HAVING written a good deal to you about what I have seen in Mexico at large, I propose here to give you, as well as I can, a sketch-history of this celebrated Real del Monte.

From the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards, upwards of three hundred years ago, this part of it was known as a mineral district, and thenceforward mining was, in the rudest manner, carried on by hundreds of small miners. They dug their holes, called mines, worked downwards till their progress was arrested by water, and then they abandoned such works, to open up and commence with others.

At last, in 1739, a Biscayan, named Don Pedro José Romero de Terreros, having, some time before, left Spain for the New World, established himself at Querétaro, capital of the adjoining

province to Mexico. Here he made some sixty thousand dollars, with which he determined to return to his native country; but passing through the district of Real del Monte, and struck with the appearance of its mineral riches, he felt an irresistible desire, by acquiring some of them, to add to his stores. He was associated with a friend, called Bustamante. They shortly, in their enterprise, exhausted their capital; but, nothing daunted, the latter went back to Querétaro, whilst the former proceeded to Mexico, to endeavour to raise new supplies. Bustamante was unsuccessful; but Terreros contrived, on the most ruinous terms, to raise funds in the capital. He returned accordingly, and at last fell upon some veins, which ended in producing for him eleven millions of dollars. Terreros then divided his property into several *mayorazgos* or entails, Regla being the principal; and he was hereupon ennobled, under the title of Conde de Santa Maria de Regla. The *hacienda* of that name being thus raised to a *mayorazgo*, the Conde, in 1760, commenced the huge pile of buildings which constitute the manor-house, chapel, and mining-works of the estate. The town of Real del Monte began to

rise, and cultivation to spread; and in the due course of nature, leaving his powerful name and influence thus established, he went the way of all living.

Of course, the Regla family had become one of the first in Mexico, and was speedily strengthened by high alliances. But the present Count, grandson of the founder, turned out a man of extravagant habits, another Duke of B—, and he may now be said to be all but ruined, unless the mines return to the magnificent *yields* of the time of the first Count, of which, appearances as yet give no indications.

In 1822-3, then, Don Ignacio Castelaso, the general agent of the Count de Regla, having drawn up a somewhat elaborate report of the mines of Real del Monte, his Italian friend, Rivafinoli, proceeded to London, with the view of making something of them, in conjunction with the Count; and, in point of fact, he brought about the formation of the celebrated company of Real del Monte, with which Mr. Kinder was so immediately concerned. England was, at the time, labouring under a plethora of riches, which was ere long lowered by the bleedings of foreign investments, led on, I may say, by Real del Monte.

The agreement was for a given number of years (I think, twenty-one); and the lease provided, that, after all capital laid out was reimbursed by the produce of the mines, then Count de Regla was to have half of the remaining proceeds yearly; while, meantime, he was to be allowed *alimentos*, or a yearly advance against his anticipated profits, of sixteen thousand dollars a year. Under no circumstances could these instalments, or, perhaps, more properly, this annual ground-rent be withheld; for, were that done, the right of actual and entire possession reverted, in the very act, to the proprietor. This mode of disposing of the Regla lands and tenements was, in point of fact, giving a lease of the whole estate, subject to a ground-rent of sixteen thousand dollars, and a royalty on the nett produce of the mines—not to commence, however, till after deduction of capital previously expended, and likewise of the aggregate *alimentos* theretofore paid.* The outlay of capital on the mines, together with the rent paid to the Count de Regla, now amount to some-

* This proves, that the *alimentos* are neither precisely, a rent, nor yet an advance against future royalties; not a rent, because it was to be deducted from future royalties; not a royalty, because, whether the mine produced anything or not, the tenure was subject to the payment of sixteen thousand dollars.

where about six or seven millions of dollars, so that he and his posterity are not likely to get much more out of this magnificent estate than the sixteen thousand dollars yearly. I must mention, too, that the Count's after-necessities having forced him frequently on the Company's purse, covenants in the original agreement were, from time to time, modified, until at length the lease was made perpetual, and the present Real del Monte Company have become the indefeasible proprietors, always subject, nevertheless, to the ground-rent of sixteen thousand dollars, a mere pepper-corn for such a truly princely possession.

The London Real del Monte Company commenced working on a magnificent scale; then, under the influence of panic, suddenly deserted, in the most critical time (as I shall explain by and by), their judicious, talented, and indefatigable agents, Captain Vetch and Captain (now Colonel) Colquhoun; and the result has been unmitigated ruin. The mania at the time was so strong and so general that no expenditure was for a moment grudged. People thought that they were laying out tens, to receive back thousands, so they "paid up" their tens with surprising alacrity. The management, in London,

of many of the new companies, under the reaction, was miserably bad; and, in the end, many shareholders were completely ruined, and retired to cottages, there to abandon for ever their "*châteaux en Espagne.*"

In 1825, the late Mr. Kinder, the enthusiastic leader of the Real del Monte Company, was offered sixteen hundred pounds for each of his thirty shares of one hundred pounds paid up in that concern: he refused to sell; that is, he would not take forty-eight thousand pounds for what had cost him three thousand. The reaction set in, and down went all shares. In 1845-6, those of the Real del Monte were to be had at two pounds ten shillings each; that is, Mr. K—'s thirty shares, which, in 1825, were worth forty-eight thousand pounds, had gradually dwindled down to seventy-five pounds! The company was all but bankrupt: no more "calls" were listened to; and the debts could not be paid with unsaleable engines, though they kept up the steam—nor yet with stones, although silver was in them. The shares have since gone to *nil;* no one will have them, fenced in as they are with unknown responsibilities and debts. In vain did their new, active, intelligent, and enterprising, though prudent,

manager and agent, Mr. Buchan, write to the shareholders to take heart, and not to throw away their property. They had been panic-stricken in the first instance; they had got sick of the business in the second; and in this last and most hopeless fit they entered into negociations for the sale of the property to a Mexican company. A bargain was struck, and the perpetual lease of Real del Monte, with everything on it, passed from the hands of the Real del Monte bondholders for an old song. The entire sum paid was one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, for a business on which seven millions of dollars had, first and last, been expended; and, even of the mite to be received, three-fourths were not to go into the hands of the bondholders at all, but to be appropriated in Real del Monte itself in the liquidation of sums still due to the servants of the old company. What a winding up! Shares once worth sixteen hundred pounds sterling each, now not worth sixteen pence! And the actual moveable property on the estate, in houses, workshops, machinery, mining establishments, timber, wood, iron, implements, utensils,. steam-engines, horses, horned cattle, mules, and many valuable miscellaneous materials, must be worth altogether some millions

of dollars. The house at Regla *alone* cost a million and a half, and *now* is valued at a million of dollars! All gone for twenty-five thousand pounds!

Thus did Real del Monte pass from the Condes de Regla in Mexico, and thus has it passed from the luckless shareholders in London;—the first paying the penalty of personal extravagance, the other an equally severe one of wild speculation and injudicious disbursement. It is now in wiser hands than theirs; and prosperity dawns on this almost national establishment or colony, as you will gather from what I have yet to say.

The house which Mr. Buchan inhabits in Real del Monte is designated by all the neighbours *la casa grande* (the large house), from being by far the most conspicuous and best in the little town. It belonged to the Conde de Regla, and he made it his occasional residence. It is, as I have said, situated close to the Church, and (as in all Spanish-American houses) you enter by a large gateway, which opens into the *patio*, a square surrounded by the buildings and corridors. Behind is an unpaved yard, round which again are all the offices. The ground-floor of the principal building is chiefly devoted to business purposes; a double

flight of steps leads up to the corridor, which extends along the front and two sides of the *patio*, adorned, as is the general custom, with a profusion of flowers, creepers, and flowering shrubs in vases, at least two hundred in number. All are evergreens, and two or three of the creepers, which gracefully festoon the rails of the corridor, being now covered with delicate and brilliant flowers, look extremely pretty.

On the first-floor are all the public rooms, and most of the bed-rooms of the house, the former large and lofty. The roof is of shingle, high and pointed, on account of the heavy rains. I occupy the library, converted into a temporary bed-room, whence I have a good view of the hill. It is, indeed, a pleasant room. The shelves are filled with books, principally scientific works, although general literature, including the chief periodicals of the day, is by no means excluded. Here I spend the little time I can spare in reading or writing.

The cold was unexpectedly severe the night we got here, and this, too, within the tropics, in the middle of summer! In fact, there has been frost since we arrived, for there is no great difference of temperature between summer and winter; it is

always very warm in the sunshine, and cold in the shade, and in the mornings and evenings either approaching to frost or freezing.

My room is the nicest, but the coldest in the house. When I got up at six on Thursday morning, I shivered at my toilette. A cup of hot coffee came opportunely and pleasantly; and at seven (without H—, who after the previous day's exertion was in no mood for early rising), we walked out with Mr. Buchan to see the working of the greatest of their mines hard by. I had been out myself half an hour before, wandering about this curious, straggling old place, where cottages cover the face of the hills to their tops, rising abruptly to the height of two or three hundred feet.

At the "Boca Mina," or mouth of the mine, is the great steam-engine, of four hundred horse-power, there placed to work a huge draining pump. The machinery is beautiful, and kept in shining order. The whole operation of pumping is interesting in the extreme. The fuel which feeds the furnaces is drawn from inexhaustible supplies of the surrounding plantations on the estate of the company.

At eight o'clock precisely the miners began to descend, by a difficult spiral stair, to their daily

tasks in the bowels of the earth, some hundreds of feet below the surface. Mr. Buchan invited us to accompany the miners, but we all declined the subterraneous visit, my own reason for doing so being, that I had, in former years, groped my way through the dark recesses of coal pits in England, and silver mines in South America.

As soon as the miners begin to descend in a long string, one by one, each with a candle stuck in front of his helmet-shaped felt cap, they commence the morning hymn, and sing it in chorus, as they wind their way down to the dark caverns of mother earth. This appeal to God, as these poor creatures are losing the sight of heaven, has an affecting sound to the ear, more particularly as it dies gradually away in the descent. They remain working till eight at night, and they are replaced by a fresh gang, who work till eight next morning. The works are suspended on the Sundays, and on some of the many holidays of Catholic countries. While the miners are below, they take no food, but have their dinner and supper in one when they come up. What a life! And to *us*, who too often neglect the obligation of thanking God, daily and nightly, for all the blessings which surround us,—what an example is the contentment

of these our poor fellow beings, who are shut out from almost all such blessings!

The working miners are chiefly Indians, who compose about three-fourths of the population of the town. The mining officers, captains of gangs, etc., are Creoles, with English superintendents of the whole work.

Adjoining the engine-house are the smithy, the turning-room, the place for metal casting, and the carpenters' department, all of which we inspected. Everything is admirably conducted; and these parts of the establishment are under the superintendence of Mr. Arthur, the chief engineer, a good-natured, merry fellow, whose size and scientific abilities are equally great. He is assisted, I think, by Captain (such is the title of head miners) Daw, one of the superintendents. All the artisans are English or Creole, and among the latter we found one or two very clever workmen.

After viewing all the scientific and mechanical elements which Mr. Buchan had at his command, at this his principal station, we walked about the town, observing its oddities and its sinuosities, with its *pulquerias*, and its houses and cottages, scattered about in "most admired disorder." The

pulqueria signs were, for the most part, drawn on the walls—rude paintings of many colours, representing trees, animals, men and women, and gods, according to the name of the *pulqueria,*—as the *pulqueria* of the Sun—of *Colossus,*—of the Good Friends,—of Apollo, and so forth. One had a group something like that which you see in ginger-beer shops at home, thus:—

On the left-hand side sat some ladies and gentlemen drinking wine, and opposite, on the right, the couplet—

"*Los Monarquistas en Roma*
Beben vino de ley;"

Then, another company drinking *pulque,* opposite which is the completion of the verse—

"*Pero nosotros los Indios*
Bebemos pulque fino de Maguey."

To be translated thus:—

"All the Monarchists in Rome
Drink the very best of wine;"

"But we Indians like to quaff
Pulque of Maguey divine."

Of the *pulque* made from the *maguey*—a plant so important in Mexico—I shall give you a succinct account by-and-by.

We returned to the "Casa Grande" at nine,

and at ten we had a famous Mexican breakfast, to which we all did ample justice.

At two P.M., the *caratela*, or phaeton, to which four horses were harnessed, with the old trusty driver, drew up to the door, and Mrs. Buchan, Miss C—, Mrs. Chenowith (denizen of the "Real"), and H—, took their seats. Four of us mounted on horseback, having Mexican saddles and *serapes*, and off we all set—a grand cavalcade—to make our first inspection of some of the many beauties of Real del Monte. Mr. Buchan chose for our ride and drive a place called Guajalōté (the Indian name for a *turkey*), but familiarly designated now as "the Farm." We went by a fine road, which skirted a romantic valley, our view enlivened by the opposite hills, wooded, as usual, from base to top. Presently we came in front of the famous *Peñas Cargadas*, literally, "loaded rocks." They are immensely large, rugged, and bare, boldly depending in imposing grandeur from almost the top of the mountain. There are two of them, both partially hidden by the rich foliage of surrounding trees, so that with the verdant carpet spread over the valley beneath, the whole effect produced is extremely fine. One of the bare rocks is said to vibrate when the wind blows very strong.

We got to the head of the valley, and entered on the romantic woodlands. On each side of the road, we had a great variety of well-grown trees (some very large), shrubs, underwood, and wild flowers. A conical hill was covered entirely with pine, fir, and spruce of every kind, which had a good effect among the other diversified woods. Winding through these, with an occasional peep of the more open scenery, we emerged from them to look down on Guajaloté, the loveliest of plains, or rather the finest of parks, adorned with trees clumped on a fine sward. This was "the farm," where the cattle, horses, and sheep were pastured. After gazing for a while at the scene which thus lay at our feet, we returned to Real del Monte, admiring once more the beauties which nature, with so lavish a hand, had scattered among the surrounding boundaries of the mining district.

Our dinner-party was increased by Mr. Brenchley, a gentleman who had been long in the employment of the old Real del Monte Company, and now about to proceed to England. The social enjoyments of the evening formed a pleasant sequel to the out-door amusements of the day.

LETTER XXXVII.

MINING STATISTICS.

Real del Monte, August, 1851.

It is not at all my intention (seeing it is not within the scope of my actual capabilities), to enter into any historical account of the mines of this country, nor yet to give purely scientific details of the various processes of mining at large, as practised in Mexico; but as the mineral riches of the country constitute its most important feature, I cannot entirely pass over the subject without notice. In what I have to say, I shall borrow from Mr. Ward, to some extent; for his elaborate and interesting account of "the mines of Mexico," is the best, if not the only one I have read; while his book is not now generally accessible to the reading community. I shall keep principally to leading statistics, except in the case of Real del Monte.

Mr. Ward gives a table, by which it appears that the registered coinage of the Mint of Mexico,

from the year 1796 to the year 1810 (inclusive), amounted to 342,114,285 dollars, or an average of 22,807,619 dollars yearly. He adds, for silver (registered, and unregistered) *not* coined, 1,192,381 dollars; thus giving twenty-four millions of dollars as the whole annual average produce of the mines of Mexico, during the fifteen years which immediately preceded the revolution of 1810.

The total average of exports of silver, during the same time on merchants' account, may be taken at about 13,000,000 dollars; and on king's account, about . 9,000,000 „

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together 22,000,000, leaving an accumulation in Mexico, of silver, in these 15 years, of about thirty millions, less the amount consumed for domestic and other purposes.

It may be sufficient here to observe, in regard to the produce of the mines and coinage, from 1810 to 1849, that the mining interest suffered severely during the course of the revolution; but that in later years, the coinage has gradually increased, till in 1848, it reached to little less than 20,000,000 of dollars, a near approach to the most flourishing times of the Spanish rule.

During certain epochs between 1810 and 1850, the falling off in some of the mines of silver, was very striking. In the district of San Luis de Potosi, for instance, the decrease of produce during the first five years (after 1810), amounted to nearly ten millions of dollars. "The produce of the Biscayna vein, at Real del Monte, in seven good years before the revolution (from 1794 to 1801), was six millions of dollars, or 857,042 dollars per annum; from 1809 to 1823, it only yielded 200,000 dollars, in all, or 14,285 dollars per annum!"

In Mexico, when rich veins of ore are fallen upon in the mines, they are called "Bonanza," "fine weather" nautically—"prosperity" metaphorically;* and marvellously fine, indeed, has that weather sometimes been. The Marquis of Bustamante acquired millions of dollars by his great *bonanza* at Batopilas; we have seen how the

* Mr Ward says, "it always signifies that things (in the mine) are going on satisfactorily; in short, that you are in the trades, with studding-sails set, and every prospect of a prosperous voyage." In Peru, the flourishing mine is said to be in *Boya*, a buoy; whence buoyant, or following out a nautical similitude, like Mr. Ward, "*en boya*," "you are in a clipper, making a quick passage."

Conde de Regla succeeded with a *bonanza* at Real del Monte; and at a mine belonging to the Fagoaga family, called *Sombreréte*, when giving about half a million of dollars annually, they fell on a celebrated *bonanza*, which disgorged eleven millions of dollars in eight months.

There are mints established in the Republic for the coinage of their precious metals, at Mexico, Guadalaxara, Zacatecas, Durango, and Guanajuato. In 1826, the whole coinage in these five mints did not exceed 7,463,300 dollars.

At the present time, the following extract from Mr. Ward's book (vol. ii, p. 49) is curious and interesting, as shewing that seventy-four years ago, such a country as Spain was benefited by Free Trade.

"This [a fund created for helping miners with *loans*], in conjunction with the removal of the commercial restrictions, by which the progress of the country had before been cramped, but which were much diminished in 1778, by the decree of Free Trade, exercised so beneficial an influence throughout New Spain, that the produce of the mines increased (in a term of ten years) from

112,828,860 dollars (silver raised from 1760 to 1769) to 193,504,554 dollars from 1780 to 1789, when the ameliorations introduced began to produce their full effect. From 1790 to 1799, still further progress was made, the produce having amounted to 231,080,214 dollars, or more than double what it had been in 1769."

In 1810, the country was supposed to contain 500 "*reales*," or "*realitos*" (spots on which mines were worked, with from three to five thousand mines, large and small), included in the thirty-seven mining districts or departments, into which the viceroyalty was divided.

It is not necessary, indeed it would not be so interesting now, as in the time of Mr. Ward (twenty-four years ago), to go into all the different phases of Mexican mining, from the first attempt at separation of the colony from the mother country—the declension, the prostration, and the recovery of the leading interest in the state. The mines were, and are, to Mexico, what arable acres are to England or France; and no political circumstances, however violent or adverse, could annihilate this great source of the riches of the country. That source was troubled

and muddy, and dammed up for a time; but the force of its own gravity cleared away all obstacles; and thus, while Mexico never was before reduced, politically, to so low a point as at present, its material, and foremost of all, its mineral interests have not been so flourishing for forty years as now. No small impetus, let it be observed *en passant*, was given to the mining interests of Mexico by the different companies formed in England, from 1824 and onwards, for the working of Mexican mines. These companies threw an aggregate original capital into the country of, perhaps, four or five millions sterling, exclusively devoted to the improvements in mining, and its development through improved machinery, more especially in several instances, and Real del Monte most strikingly, through the splendid steam-power introduced into the country, and by the assistance of able mineral and mechanical agents.

In former times, a great part of the mining interest was managed through the agency of *rescatadores*, meaning, literally, "ransomers," a class of middle-men, who made advances to the miners, taking their ores, at prices agreed upon,

in repayment. The *rescatadores* then carried off the ores thus purchased to establishments of their own, where they were reduced, and sent as silver to the mint for coinage. These *rescatadores*, however, have very generally disappeared, more especially since the establishment of foreign and native companies, which, again, buy ores from their poorer neighbours.

It is worthy of remark here, that, in the province of Sonora, lying so close to California, and so well known for its auriferous riches, some very extraordinary specimens of virgin silver were found, nearly a century and a half ago. The discovery of the famous balls of silver, dug up at Arizona, Mr. Ward says, would be fabulous, were it not that ample proof of their existence is found in the vice-regal archives. The weight of the pieces discovered was, in all, 165 arrobas 8 lbs. (4033 lbs.), one mass of pure silver weighing 2700 lbs., and another 225 lbs. Even the vice-regal records, however, will scarcely make the first of these weights, upwards of a ton, credible in these incredulous times.

Humboldt calculated, in 1803, that Mexico had then yielded an aggregate of silver equal in

value to 1,767,952,000 dollars;* and, in addition to what I have already incidentally mentioned, it may be interesting here, to give some further instances of the mineral wealth produced in particular localities. Thus—

1.—In Guanajuato, the Valenciana mine averaged annually, from 1788 to 1810, 1,446,067 dollars.

2.—In San Luis de Potosi, the Catorce yielded 2,854,000 dollars per annum, from 1800 to 1804.

3.—In Temascaltepec, state of Mexico, the Real del Arriba, 600,000 dollars per annum.

4.—In Chihuahua, the Santa Eulalia gave, in eighty-six years, 100,000,000 dollars.

5.—The metalliferous dust of the famous mine of Zavala (also in the north), produced 4,000,000 dollars in two years.

6.—In the state of Mexico, the mines of Santa Ana and San Geronimo were so rich in their

* Or 2,027,952,000 dollars, if one-seventh be added for *unregistered* silver; but this seems a low or mistaken calculation, since it appears that the registered *coinage* of Mexico, *in one hundred and thirty-six years*, amounted to 1,708,173,436 dollars; whereas the silver raised from the mines extends to a period of *two hundred and eighty-two years*.

yield, that, after living upon their produce during his whole life, the owner bequeathed by his will, of which Mr. Ward has an authentic copy, 4,000,000 dollars, the greater proportion of which was left to pious institutions.

7.—La Luz, *denounced** in 1804, and which still continues to be a celebrated mine, has given the original proprietor, "the Licentiate Gordoa, the estate of Mal Paso, near Zacatecas (for which he paid 700,000 dollars), and 1,000,000 dollars capital."†

The value and purchase of ores are taken by the *carga*, weighing 300 lbs.: now, that may contain one *mark* (8 ounces) of silver, or it may contain any indefinite higher quantity—50, 100, 200 *marks*, and so forth—and, of course, the price of

* *Denunciar* means, to apply to the government for the occupation of a certain small space of land, for the purpose of mining, and which, the party offering to fulfil the conditions laid down in the mining code, must of necessity be conceded. Failing fulfilment within one year, the property reverts to the state.

† The mine of San Bernabé, in Zacatecas, worked by the *conquistadores*, was so productive as to give rise to this couplet, in an old song, in reference to the first owner, Ybarra, who married the viceroy's daughter:—

"Had the metal of St. Bernabé not been of such good *ley* (standard),
Ybarra never could have married daughter of *virey* (viceroy)."

the *carga* is according to the supposed, or tolerably well ascertained, quantity of silver which it contains. *Poor* ores, if they can be brought to the surface largely and inexpensively, can be worked to profit and advantage; rich ores, it need scarcely be added, can stand a high expense, and comparatively small extraction from the *matrix*.

Thus, the *carga* of the best ores in the Licentiate's rich mine sold at from 340 to 380 dollars; and in the ores from a particular level of La Purisima (at Catorce), belonging to the opulent family of the Obregons, sold at 380, 400, and even 600 dollars per *carga*. Nay, some of the ores of Santa Anita, belonging to the Marquis of Royas, during the great *Bonanza* of 1740, sold for their weight in silver, in consequence of the large proportion of gold contained in them. The ores of Real del Monte, which are at present poor, but apparently inexhaustible, are not worth, on an average, more than four or five dollars per *carga*.

It must also be observed, that the *carga* depends on another circumstance for its value; that is, the probable quantity of gold mixed up with the silver in the ore. Some ores have given as much as two

thousand grains to the mark, and some only contain pure silver. While stating this, I may say that all silver containing gold is sent for separation to the *Apartado* in Mexico, an establishment, the new one now just finished, built on the most magnificent scale, and, I presume, beyond anything of the same kind in the world.

A rich mine is, for the purpose of partial sale or partnership, generally divided into twenty-four *barras*—or shares, which, in the best mines, have sold for, and are worth, large sums of money—from so many hundred up to perhaps twenty or thirty thousand dollars each, whatever may have been their primitive value—something in the way of the Great Bridgewater Canal shares.*

* The mine of Quebradilla, when the company, to whom it belonged, was dissolved in 1817, divided 75,000 dollars on each *barra*, although the partnership had only existed seven years.

LETTER XXXVIII.

MINING STATISTICS CONCLUDED.

Real del Monte, August, 1851.

From my desultory remarks and facts, you will gather how it comes that mining is the paramount interest of Mexico; and it has this farther important bearing on the country, that it gives a vigorous impulse to the other great interests of the state. It offers a market for an immense amount of national produce which could not, to any advantage, be exported. A large population is engrossed by the mines—thousands and tens of thousands of animals are required for their working. Produce is wanted, and lands are consequently cultivated to bring it forward. Every town and city (with a few notable exceptions, no doubt) depend on the mining industry and capital; and thus, both commerce and agriculture are vivified and expanded by mining interests.

The following summary is at once so complete

and so compact, that I cannot help giving it to you, somewhat compressed; because it not only completes appropriately what I had to say on Mexican mining, but because I could not possibly do the thing so well as Mr. Ward. My quotation is long, but too full of matter to be anything but interesting.

"The most fertile portion of the table-land—the Baxio—contiguous to Guanajuato, comprising a portion of the States of Guanajuato; the valley of Toluca, and the southern parts of the State of Valladolid, which supply both the capital and adjoining mining districts; the plains of Pachuca and Apáur, to the foot of the mountains, upon which the mines of Real del Monte and Chico are situated; Itzmiquilpan, which owes its existence to Zimapan; Aguascalientes, supplying Zacatecas; a considerable circle in the vicinity of Sombrerete and Fresnillo; the valley of the Jarol, and plains about San Luis de Potosi (rivalling the famous mines of Potosi, in Peru). A little farther north is Matuahala, with seven thousand inhabitants, created by the discovery of the Catórcé; while Durango has sprung from San Dimas and Guarisamey. Its population rose in twelve years

from eight to twenty thousand inhabitants, while whole streets and squares were added to its extent by the munificence of Zambrano, owner of the mines. Santa Eulalia gave rise to Chihuahua (to the north); Batopilas and El Parral are surrounded by vegetation; so is 'Jesus Maria'; Mapini, Cuencame, and Indee, served to develop the natural fertility of the banks of the Núzas; while in the low, hot regions of Sónóra and Cinaloa, almost every place, now designated a town, was originally and is still, a Real or district of mines."

"An infinity of other places, Mr. Ward goes on to say, arose, which but for the mines never would have existed; some surviving, and others giving way with the mines which had called them into existence; in which case, however, they swelled the population of the more fortunate vicinities.

Mr. Ward then proceeds thus: "An examination into the sources of the wealth of the principal families of the Mexican nobility, will confirm what I have stated in regard to the towns, by leading us nearly to the same result. The family of Regla, which now possesses landed property to an immense extent, in various parts of the country, purchased the

whole of it with the proceeds of the mines of Real del Monte. The Fagoagas owe their present importance to the great *Bonanza* of the Pavellón at Sombrerete. The estates of the family of Vivánco proceeded from the mines of Bolaños. The houses of Valenciana, Ruhl, Perez Galvez, and Otero, are all indebted for their possessions to the mines of Valenciana and Villalpando, at Guanajuato. The family of Sardaneta (Los Marqueses de Rayas) takes its rise from the mine of that name. Cáta and Mellado gave to their first proprietor (Don Francisco Matias de Busto) the Marquisate of San Clemente, with immense wealth, a part of which has been transmitted to his descendants. The Cañada of Laborde at Tlalpujahua, with the mines of Quebradilla and San Acasio, at Zacatecas, all contributed towards the three fortunes of Laborde. The family of the Obregones owes its beautiful estates (at Leon) to the mines of La Purísima, and Concepcion at Catórce; as does the family of Gordoa the estate of Malpaso, to the mine of La Luz. The son of Zambrano (the discoverer of Guarisamey), wasted as his rightful property has been, is still in possession of four of the largest estates at Durango;

and Batopilas gave to the Marquis of Bustamante both the means of purchasing his title (for which he paid by a loan of three hundred thousand dollars to the Royal Treasury), during the revolution, and the affluence which he is now enjoying in the Peninsula."

Mr. Ward makes so few exceptions of families who have *not* owed their wealth and position to mines, that I think the circle might safely be enlarged; at least my impression in Mexico was, that there were many great *hacendados*, not only unconnected with mines, but who had not acquired their status and riches from mining ancestors. Mr. Ward adds, that "the mines furnished the means of building the vast *Presas de Agua*, or Reservoirs, without which agriculture can so seldom be carried on successfully on table land;" and this, I presume, may be taken, less or more, to be the fact.

My business being more especially with Real del Monte, I shall only further cull from Mr. Ward's conscientious review of the leading mining establishments of Mexico, his notice of the one named, as it existed in 1826.

"The possessions of the Real del Monte

Company on the two great veins of Santa Brigida and La Biscaina (which are usually regarded in England as *one* mine), cover a space of 11,800 yards, and are intersected at intervals by 33 shafts, varying in depth from 200 to 270 yards,* but all sunk with a magnificence unparalleled in Europe. The whole of these shafts, together with the great *adit*, which follows the direction of the two veins, branching off from the Santa Brigida vein at the point where it intersects that of the Biscaina, and from which the wealth of the Regla family was principally derived, were delivered over to the company in July 1824, in a state of absolute ruin. Many of the shafts had fallen in (though cut, at intervals, in the solid porphyritic rock); in others, the timbers had given way; and in all, as the *adit* was completely choked up, the water had risen to an enormous height. In July 1826, when I visited Real del Monte, the

* The lowest is the Dolores, given, in 1848, as 320 *varas* (a measure of two feet nine inches) deep. Cayetano is 347; Santa Teresa is 335; Terrero, 370; Guadalupe, 210. Santa Agatha and San Francisco are the highest. The great *adit* is 242 *varas* below the mouth of the Terreros shaft, being 2½ *varas* high, and 1½ wide, throughout; and, with a very gentle fall, runs for 2½ miles, to the opening in Moran, below.

adit was cleared and re-timbered, from the mouth (near the mine of Moran), to the shaft of Dolores (a distance of 2,807 yards; seven of the great shafts on the Biscaina vein, and two on that of Santa Brigida, were repaired down to the *adit*-level (213 *varas*), forming, in all, a space of 12,439 feet that had been re-timbered, and 5,921 feet that had been actually dug out anew, in order to free it from rubbish, in the course of two years: 45,400 yards of road were likewise made during the same time, by which a communication by waggons was opened from the different shafts to the farms on the mountains, as well as to the great *hacienda de Regla*, between which and the mines 600 mules were formerly employed daily, in the conveyance of ores. At all the principal shafts, buildings were erected, with magazines, and workshops for carpenters and smiths, enclosed by lofty stone walls. At Regla, a 36-feet water-wheel had been made; and a wheel-pit built for its reception. Eight of the old *arrastres* (crushing-mills), worked by water, had been repaired; dwelling-houses for miners built; smelting-furnaces erected; stabling completed for 500 mules and horses; and every preparation made for

putting the whole establishment into activity, the instant that the drainage of the mines could be effected.

"To accomplish this, five large steam-engines, a steam stamping-engine, and two small saw-mill engines, amounting, in all, to 1,500 tons of machinery, were sent out from England, all of which have been transported from the coast to Real del Monte by the party under the orders of Captain Colquhoun, whose exertions on this most arduous enterprise, had they been made in the field, would have excited both the surprise and the gratitude of the country. Seven hundred mules were employed, during five months, upon this great work, with from seventy to one hundred men, without including those who had been previously occupied in repairing such parts of the road, between Vera Cruz and Perote, as must have proved impassable for loaded waggons.

"Nothing could be more honourable to the director, Captain Vetch, than the flourishing state of the establishment at the period of my visit; nor do I think that the most timorous of the shareholders would have murmured at the expense, had they seen the ability with which

the whole plan had been traced, and witnessed all that two years had enabled their agents to effect."

Real del Monte continued to languish; for, after a struggle of twenty years, it never got to the point of paying its own expences and improvements, estimated at 30,000 dollars monthly. But not a shadow of this untoward result is to be attributed to the principal managers at Real del Monte. They were enabled to lay a splendid foundation; and then, I may say, were given bricks without straw to rear the edifice. "The energy and skill of our countrymen," justly remarks Mr. Latrobe, "in the construction of new shafts, and the substitution of steam for animal power; the great roads constructed to Pachuca, Regla, and to Vera Cruz, whence all their machinery has been transported on its arrival from England; and the order and wisdom evident in all the operations, are not unworthy of the British name."

As none of our party descended any of the shafts, and as I want you to gather a general notion of the best Mexican mines, from my account of Real del Monte in particular, the

following extract, from Latrobe's "Rambler," you will find interesting.

"But now, if you choose, you may accompany us to the mouth of the Dolores shaft, when, having been garbed in miner's dresses, with heads well defended with a kind of felt helmet, we began our descent by ladders, accompanied by two of the English captains or overseers, and went down, down, down into the bowels of the earth. We passed the mouth of the *adit;* and reaching the bottom of the mine, in our progress from one shaft to another, visited every part of the 'workings.' To gain and examine some of these required a certain degree of strength and resolution, from the dangerous nature of the descent and exit. They were various in appearance; sometimes a shapeless excavation, and at other times wrought into the form of a gallery, according as the rock had been rich or poor in the ore, which is found in a quartz matrix, embodied in the porphyry rock, of which the whole chain consists.

"The system of mining struck me as peculiar. The common miners are, for the most part, of the Indian race. A few of them band together,

to work in company, and take their equal share of the proceeds. They are paid four rials a day by the company, and take, as their perquisite, one-eighth of the ore extracted.

"On issuing from the mouth of the mine, the confederates themselves divide the lumps of ore, rich and poor, into eight heaps, in the presence of one of the overseers, and that overseer determines which of the eight shall be given up to them. There are subterranean offices, where the tools and candles are kept, and regularly served out and reclaimed, by an officer charged with that particular duty. Blasting, and other operations, are carried on, as in other mines.

"There are, upon an average, about three hundred Indians constantly thus engaged in the different parts of the mine, and the scenes presented in those gloomy caves, where they work by the red light of their tapers, with scarcely any covering, are far beyond my describing.

"The ascent of the great shaft of the Terreros, from the depth of nearly a thousand feet, by means of a series of perpendicular ladders, thirty-two in number, was one of the most fatiguing

exploits I ever undertook. We were, nevertheless, highly gratified by our adventure."

Any further notice I have to take on mining operations, you will find in my own personal narrative.

LETTER XXXIX.

SANCHEZ—VELASCO—SUMATE.

Real del Monte, August, 1851.

Resuming now the thread of my story, I proceed to say, that on the morning of the 17th (the ladies still lazy), Mr. Brenchley having offered his services as *cicerone*, we were on horseback by seven, and went to a place situated among the mountains, called Cañalejos. The ride there was indescribably beautiful; winding by a narrow path which bordered a clear and rippling stream all the way: now meandering through the thickest and most luxuriant of the woods — the wild flowers scenting the air—and the branches of the trees only now and then letting in the rays of the morning sun. Then came a full opening; and all the wood-covered mountains, cliffs, and ravines,

were suddenly disclosed to our view! Anon a beautiful sward terminated by jutting rocks, copse-wood, and undulating ground. The whole ride opened up a perfect gem of romantic scenery.

Our ride, in the keen morning air, caused on our return, an enormous demolition of the Mexican-English breakfast to which we sat down. It much reminded me of the real Scotch one; for to many tempting substantials, were superadded splendid tea, cream, fresh butter, English hot rolls, and new-laid eggs.

Our second expedition, this day, was to Sanchez and Velasco; two principal establishments of the Company. The three ladies, Mrs. Buchan, Miss C—, and H—, were mounted on horseback, so that we made quite a gallant and picturesque appearance as we defiled through the mountain passes, ascended the heights, or cantered along the fine Macadamised road, constructed and kept in excellent repair, throughout the whole ravine. This we descended, and traversed by the side of the mountain stream, which brawled and leaped over the scattered rocks and stones, lying in its bed, as it made good its course to the plain below. We were now to the north of the town of Real del

Monte, in the opposite direction to that which we had taken the day before; but the high mountains were, as ever, covered with wood, while their steep sides, rising abruptly from the bottom of the ravine to their summits, rendered the scene even more striking, because bolder and grander than that which we had seen on the south side.

Arriving at Sanchez, some two miles on, we found it was a very extensive establishment for the crushing of ores; brought hither from the mouths of the mines, for the purpose of extracting the silver by amalgamation.

There are three processes by which the crushing is effected, and which, of course, we saw in operation at Sanchez. First, the *morteros*, or stampers, moved by water; secondly, the *arrastre*, or crushing mill; and thirdly, by edge stone mills.

The ores, on their arrival, are broken down with hammers by labourers, after the fashion of our stone-breakers by the road sides. The metal without ore is cast aside, and the remainder arranged in heaps, according to quality. The richest is reserved for smelting, the rest brought to silver by amalgamation.

The first process then is that of the *morteros*.

These are sets of heavy stamps or beetles, working horizontally on the ores in their first state, and very efficaciously crushing them; but not to so fine a powder as the amalgamating process requires.

Then let us look at the *arrastres*. Fancy a great shed (called here "*Galera*"), supported along its length by two rows of wooden pillars, and covering from thirty to forty grinding mills, all at work, each of which is worked by four mules (here and there an old horse instead), which walk slowly round, moving four circular stones which revolve within the mill; both the wall and bottom of this, and the stones themselves being of granite. The ores are thus being crushed to an almost impalpable dust or mud. Your view is nearly lost in the distance as you look from one end to the other of the double range of mules performing their melancholy, slow, but constant rotatory task.

The old process of amalgamation is tedious and intricate; and I need not, I think, go into all its parts and particulars. If you are anxious to make yourself master of the details, I refer you to Mr. Ward, vol. ii. pp. 436—38. As he states it, the operation, in few words, commences with making each class of ore into a "*torta*" or pie, in a large open

space (*el patio*); then each *torta* into heaps; then is added first a certain quantity of salt; next so much *magistral* (a copper ore), then quicksilver. Next, the whole is worked up or kneaded for a length of time—four to six weeks, to insure a perfect mixture of the silver and quicksilver: again the mass is washed in large vats, to get quit of all earthy particles: again it is strained—the amalgam separated—the silver well roasted (the quicksilver being sublimed, and afterwards condensed) —the pure silver cut into wedges, melted into bars, and so sent to the mint.

But in Mr. Ward's time the new process of amalgamation by *revolving barrels* was not known in Mexico, but which Mr. Buchan is practically proving to be the best and most efficacious. I believe it was first practised at Freiburg, in Germany. They are set in huge troughs, one set on the ground, another on the first floor of the large apartments in which they move. They are longitudinally placed in several rows; when loaded with stones, and turned by water-power on their axes, they reduce the ores beneath them.*

* Since this was written I have received Mr. Buchan's report, to which I refer.

We examined the whole mass in the vats, at the bottom of which lay the quicksilver, which was brought up and squeezed off in leathern bags—a curious enough operation. The loss of quicksilver is from nine to eleven ounces in each mark (eight ounces) of silver. The cost of reducing a heap of 2200 lbs. of ore to silver, is about twenty dollars, and as much more for raising the ore from the mine. These two sums are equivalent to five marks of silver; and therefore the additional quantity rendered by the *monton* goes to the miner. According to this calculation (it is Mr. Ward's, at the mine of Salgado), where a *monton* of 2200 lbs. of ore, did not yield five marks of silver, a loss would be sustained. The *montons* he saw, were expected to yield, the rich, fourteen marks, the poor eight, both giving a profitable result.

Sanchez is situated in the very heart of the mountains, so as to give it a good water-power. All the interesting operations, at which I glanced, were explained to us in the most lucid manner by Mr. Buchan; and, of course, when you have under you the wonders of nature, and see them rendered subservient to the uses of man by all the aids of

industry and science, a much more vivid interest is created than by a mere register of them with the pen.

The establishment is under the superintendence of Mr. Petrowski, a Polish gentleman, of scientific acquirements, who seemed thoroughly to understand his business. He amused us much, by showing us some curious effects of the blow-pipe, and by illustrating some of the phenomena of metallurgy.

After having spent three hours over Sanchez, we proceeded to Velasco, two miles farther on, and about two leagues and a half from Real del Monte. The drive and ride continued to be extremely picturesque, and the road most excellent. On our arrival at Velasco, which is finely situated just at the opening of the valley of Regla, we were kindly received by Captain Paul, the manager of the establishment, and by his wife.

Velasco has been fixed upon by the new Company of Real del Monte, under the reports and advice of Mr. Buchan, as the great central point of their ramified and splendid undertaking. In accordance with this view, the works now going on are of the most extensive, solid, and imposing

nature, and when finished will constitute a very noble mining establishment. Velasco is intended principally for the amalgamation of ores; and lying nearly equidistant from the principal mines of the Real, and the smelting works of Regla, with which there is constantly a great traffic, its position is greatly superior to that of Sanchez. The amalgamation of the ores will, I understand, be chiefly effected by the revolving-barrel system, to which Mr. Buchan seems to give a decided preference. The premises in progress, accordingly, for carrying out this mode of reduction, are on quite a grand scale, as regards extent, with a solid and plain architecture,—the material used being a beautiful granite. The whole thing, when finished, will form the completest, and at the same time most compact establishment of the kind in Mexico. As Mr. Buchan will require to be very much at his central point of his operations, he is erecting a pretty cottage contiguous to the works, and in this, as in all his other labours, he has been singularly happy in the choice of his spot. Here also, with his family, he will agreeably vary his general residence at Real del Monte.

In high spirits, and at a pace which only Macadamised roads would permit, we returned towards dinner hour; and with the addition of one or two mining officers at table, we again finished the day agreeably, resolving to make, on the morrow, an excursion to the pinnacle of *Sumate*, a celebrated mountain near Real del Monte, and about eleven thousand feet above the level of the sea.

We were all in the *patio*, mounted, after breakfast, our party consisting of Captain Gros, our leader, (attended by an Indian on foot), Miss C—, H—, Don Manuel Escandon, Mr. G—, and myself.

I have already said much about the English-made roads of Real del Monte—wide, smooth, Macadamised, and always scientifically seeking the best gradients. Of the old Spanish-American highways, and of their byeways and bridle-paths, I may just say that in Mexico they are nearly all of one character—just made passable, narrow, broken, rugged, rocky, muddy, slippery, steep, and dangerous, but always leading you through beautiful scenery—the more romantic, the worse the road.

And so to Sumate. Entering on one of these paths, we mounted a high hill, almost perpendicularly, slowly and gradually leaving the deep glen at our feet.* The scenery, fine throughout, seemed, if possible, to improve at every step, as we advanced upwards.

At length, after a partial descent of the opposite side of the hill, with such difficulties as great slabs of bare rock every now and then forming part of the pathway, over which our horses had to slide or jump, we reached a point beyond which our sturdy and sure-footed animals could no longer scramble. There, at the base of an apparently

* As we entered upon this glen, and skirted the high and impending side of the great ravine, we rode for some short time along the rivulet which brawled and played through such of the *disjecta membra* of the mountain rocks, as lay in the stream, or sparkled on those which were scattered along the sward in every variety of shape and size. Then, kneeling on either side, and here and there on the flat stones in the rivulet, were assembled a long string of Indian females, who, having thrown aside their *rebozos*, appeared scantily but cleanly dressed in white. They were the washerwomen of Real del Monte; and, of course, at the stream they were plying their vocation. The clothes were laid out to dry on the sward, the nearest bushes, or the rocks; and as we passed through the long ranks of the *lavanderas*, I thought I had never witnessed a more primitive scene.

unattainable height, crowned by the bare and huge rocks of Sumate, we left our horses, and, assisting the ladies as we best could, began to climb the perilous ascent, whose surface presented loose stones, jutting rocks, trees, bushes, thick underwood and brambles, all verdant, and, as ever, intermingled with flowers and creepers. Now we laid hold of twigs, now of roots and stumps of trees, sometimes slipping back, sometimes advancing, but all merry and laughing at each other. The only casualty was the loss of H—'s eye-glass, torn from the chain, and which has yet to be found by some traveller who may follow our adventurous footsteps.

At last we all made a safe landing on our first stage, on the great flat surface of the lower of the two giant rocks which crown the majestic Sumate. Heaven! What a scene burst on our delighted view! As far as the eye could reach, what a magnificent panorama under our gaze! — mountains, rocks, woods, valleys; extended plains, dark and savage ravines, — presenting a *tout ensemble* of all that was grand and beautiful in nature! Then scattered about were cottages and farms, cultivated fields and villages; while the blue

smoke ascending from the pine forests, spoke of the rugged and lonely life of the *carbonero*. Water alone, as too often happens in Mexico, was the only feature wanting to render the scene complete.

Here we remained, resting and enjoying the vision for an hour; and Mr. G—, producing his "pocket-pistol" (more likely to benefit us now, than on our way from Mexico to Real del Monte), and finding, at the same time, some crystal clear water in a hollow of the rock, we enjoyed the refreshment. Some of us enhanced it by a mild Havana. I was cheered or jeered, I do not know which, by saying that we required "summat" on the summit of Sumate.

But the highest point was the pinnacle of the second or superior rock; and, to enable us to mount it (for it was perfectly bare, and nearly perpendicular), Captain Gros had made our Indian guide bring a rope, slung at his back. Chamois-like, he was, in an instant, on the top; and, making fast one end of the rope to an excrescent point of the rock, the other end was held, nautically, "taught" by Captain Gros below; so that laying hold of the rope, as you would the "rigging" of a plank, we were easily enabled to ascend. We

got another splendid view, a slight enlargement, in fact, of the first, from the real pinnacle of Sumate; and there, from one or two fissures which held a scanty soil, I gathered several little stunted plants, which, in small flower-pots, I am about to carry to Mexico.

I have already mentioned, that the summit of Sumate is calculated at 11,000 feet above the level of the sea: that makes about 2,500 feet above Real del Monte: Of these 2,500 feet, the two crowning rocks embrace, I should think, 450 feet; 300 the lower, and 150 the higher. The girth of the latter could not be less than 200 feet.

We returned from Sumate by a still more beautiful road than that which had conducted us to it. There were several openings in the woods, presenting from twenty to a hundred acres of sward or lawn, with here or there a standard tree or a clump, which no scientific gardening could have placed with more symmetrical beauty. We got to Mr. Buchan's at six, and enjoyed the evening over many anecdotes of the day's work and "hair-breadth 'scapes."

LETTER XL.

THE HACIENDA DE REGLA.

Real del Monte, August 1851.

On Sunday, the 19th, we made no excursion. In the school-room of the "Real," Mr. Buchan reads prayers regularly on the Christian's day of rest; so to this memento of Protestant England we proceeded, about the usual hour of eleven, the ladies in the *caratela*, driven by Mrs. Buchan, and we, the men, jogging along on foot. A respectable *male* congregation was assembled, together with some nice-looking children; but, somewhat to my surprise, no females, except those who came from Mr. Buchan's own house, attended prayers. The fact is, there are very few English females in Real del Monte: and being all married, with families to look after, the head has often to do Sunday-duty for all the household.

Mr. Buchan read the service impressively and

we had very fair singing from an amateur choir. The number of persons present was about sixty; and, I need scarcely add, that the deportment of all was of that grave and decent character which, at home and abroad, so peculiarly marks an English congregation.

We spent the remainder of the day at home quietly, every day more and more delighted with our host and hostess. At night we made our party for the Hacienda and Barranca of Regla, the great excursion of Real del Monte, and which will form my concluding topic of one of the pleasantest weeks I have spent either in Mexico or elsewhere.

We started from Mr. Buchan's (Monday, 20th) about seven in the morning; our party consisting of Miss C—, H—, Mr. G—, and myself, in the carriage, and Mr. Escandon and Captain Gros on horseback.

We passed through the beautiful glen which leads to Velasco, where we observed an enormous amount of different work going simultaneously and energetically forward. Emerging, at this point, from the hilly country, we entered on the plain or valley below; and you cannot imagine

a finer or more English-looking country than that which we traversed. The road, like all the roads made by the company, is as good as the best we have at home; and, although not hemmed in by hedges, a row of fine trees on either side of us, with cultivated fields beyond, and mountains in the distance, formed a very pleasing scene as a whole. In the enjoyment of this picturesque country, we deviated, after a few miles, from our direct line of march, and passed through the Indian village or town called Jautla, where orchards and a luxurious vegetation added a variety to the landscape; and then, advancing another mile or so, we came to San Miguel, a pleasant country-house, belonging to the Regla family. Here we stopped, and were received by Don Ignacio Castelazo, the administrator of the present heirs of the celebrated Count de Regla. We were politely received by Don Ignacio, his wife, and daughter; and, at the same time, he introduced us to a gentleman of some celebrity in Mexico, and of whom we made a pleasant friend, M. Floreci, an Italian marquis, long engaged in mining pursuits, and now connected with the new Real del Monte Company. He

has made two or three fortunes in mining, and lost them, I fancy, by his too ardent and speculative temperament.

The marquis is now erecting buildings, on a large scale, for the purpose of reducing the poorer ores, on an economical principle, invented by and only known to himself. The buildings appeared to me to be of too decorative a style for mere working purposes in Mexico; and, when finished, must cost much more, I should think, than his own estimate of fifty thousand dollars. As he is deeply interested, however, in the success of his novel, and, by all accounts, scientific enterprise, a criticism of his *modus operandi* may fairly be considered as premature. M. Floreci is a gentlemanlike and accomplished person; perfectly acquainted with the English language, and other living idioms, having travelled over and resided in many parts of Europe.

The great attraction here is "el ojo del agua," a splendid spring, which waters a beautiful glen, adjoining the residence and works of the place. Through this valley the rivulet finds its devious way. Its high sloping banks are profusely decked with trees, creepers, air plants, and wild flowers.

The soft murmuring of the waters, as they play among the large stones which are scattered throughout the stream, soothe the ear in the midst of the sylvan scene. We found here the wild grape, and strawberry, the apple and other fruits.

A drive of two miles or less, brought us from San Miguel to the Hacienda de Regla, which forms the most extraordinary mass of buildings I ever saw in my life. I scarcely dare attempt a description of the place, for I fear I never could convey to you any correct idea of what it is—the prison-like castle, with its mining works — a gigantic, strong, irregular pile of household building, over dungeons, vaults, and tunnels, with magazines, spires or turrets, courts, back yards, furnaces, smelting and amalgamation works—all forming a *toute ensemble*, which one must see, and not have described.

Mr. Ward visited Regla. After mentioning the forests and farms which constitute part of the great estate, I might safely say, the principality of Real del Monte, he tells us that it is proposed to introduce English farming into the district. That has been quietly making its way, and is now decidedly on the advance. When I get to England, I

intend to lend a helping hand in so good a cause.

Mr. Ward then says: — "These farms are situated between the Real del Monte and the Hacienda de Regla, which is likewise ceded to the Company. I visited, on the 25th of July, this stupendous monument of the magnificence of the old Mexican miners, which may be regarded, at the same time, as the best proof of the value of their mines. It is situated in a deep ravine, about six leagues to the east of Real del Monte; it not having been found possible to obtain a sufficient command of water at a less distance.

"The *hacienda* is composed of a vast pile of buildings, constructed apparently without plan or regularity, but comprising every thing that a mining establishment can require; immense vaulted rooms for the reception of the ores: twenty-four *arrastres* (crushing mills), worked by horizontal water wheels; a number of furnaces for smelting; and two covered *patios* (courts), each of about 200 feet in length, in which the process of amalgamation was carried on. These are to be replaced by a water wheel (now constructing by the Company), which is thirty-six feet in diameter, and is to put in motion forty-eight stamps.

"The whole *hacienda* is supposed to have cost nearly a million of dollars;* and this I am not inclined to regard as an exaggerated estimate. In 1795, 5000 *cargas* of ore were received there weekly. Yet even this enormous establishment was thought insufficient for the mines; and another *hacienda,* San Antonio, was constructed, at a little distance from Regla, which is likewise a splendid mass of buildings, although not comparable to Regla in size and importance." So far Mr. Ward; and I may just add that San Antonio has been abandoned, as a mining establishment.

We entered, then, this great citadel-castle by a broad rising causeway; and proceeding up a stair, found ourselves in a long and somewhat dilapidated corridor. We were received by Mr. and Mrs. Bell, the worthy couple who have the charge of the *hacienda;* he being chief smelter of the Company. They have but recently arrived from *Durham,* and having yet their northern accent, their homely dialect sounded oddly to my ears, in a palace which the lords of Regla had

* Captain Lyon says, £500,000 or two millions and a half of dollars; and I certainly think Mr. Ward's estimate is much under the actual cost.

built, little imagining that a plain denizen of Durham, with his tidy English wife, would one day supplant and rule over the vast feudality which they, the lords paramount, had created at the expense of millions of dollars, extracted from the bowels of the earth underneath; and which they compelled, as it were, to afford them the means of accomplishing their gigantic works.

If we had a feudal and lordly building, Mr. and Mrs. Bell certainly gave us a feudal and baronial breakfast. Such another breakfast, for variety and substantiality of viands, saw I never. Beef steaks, chops, pies, stews, roasts, hams, fowls, vegetables, omelettes, eggs, puddings, pancakes, cheese — washed down with claret, sherry, and excellent ale. And *then*, came tea and coffee, with splendid bread and butter, toast and cakes! That *was* a breakfast, of which no Count de Regla need have been ashamed.

From the breakfast table, Mr. Bell conducted us to the great smelting works of Regla, which were at the time in actual operation. The vault or cavity into which a row of huge furnaces disgorged their contents, was about two hundred feet in length, and eighty to a hundred in width,

smoke-dried, black, and rough. The scoria from the ores came out of the furnaces, in soft, ductile cakes; and as they gradually cooled, they were thrown on heaps of now vitrified masses, misshapen and strange in their conformations. To look into the heated furnaces, would have been something terrific to such as had not visited our our own manufacturing districts, more particularly those of Staffordshire; and, adding the blackened visages of the workmen, with their long iron implements for handling the glowing materials of their vulcan-like home; the scene was one of almost satanic grandeur. How few consider, and how still fewer know all the intermediate processes, by which metals, extracted from mother earth, come to administer to the wants of a complicated civilisation, from a doubloon down to a pin!

Of the whole process of smelting, I need not here speak; for it is one, the acquaintance with which is open to all, either through actual observation in England, or through popular or scientific publications.

From the *fundicion de metales*, we proceeded, through vaults and tunnels, to the back part of the gigantic *hacienda*, there to have our wondering

eyes directed to a very different, but still more interesting object—the waterfall of Regla. The great castle-house is built on a platform by one side of the river; and on the opposite bank rises a gigantic natural wall or rampart, frowning over the leviathan building itself.

Having viewed the caverns there, and passed through the tunnels of the monster house, we emerged into light, and found that the river flowed through a continuous range of immense basaltic pillars, with great blocks of which the ground was strewed. These had, by time or storm, been detached from the great range; and this terminated with a beautiful fall, the water having scooped out for itself a semicircle of the rocks, over which it plunged into a deep pool beneath. The fall, though imposing in its appearance, is not more than twenty-five or thirty feet in height; but its fine curve adds greatly to its effect and beauty. A daring enthusiast once leapt from the fall to the pool, and was saved. "The basaltic columns," in Captain Lyon's words, "are remarkably regular; the left-hand cliff cannot be less than one hundred feet higher than the fall, where the waters are fancifully divided by two

pillars, which appear so much separated from their neighbours, as to lead to a supposition that they will soon be entirely detached and broken. The river flows rapidly over a rugged bed of broken columns, after its escape from the basin, which is almost overshadowed by beautiful trees. The ravine is one of the most beautiful and perfect basins of basalt in the world. The steep banks of the stream, which are composed of the *débris* of the overhanging columnar cliffs, are eminently picturesque; and amid the blocks and broken basaltic pillars are flourishing luxuriant rock plants, unknown to Europeans; while, on the precipice to the left hand climbs an immense plant of the 'five-leaved vine,' which fancifully covers the columns to a great extent with its bright scarlet and green leaves."

So says Captain Lyon, in 1826; and such I found the fall twenty-three years afterwards. I have only to remark farther, that "the two pillars" still stand; and that I saw the most curious object of all, the five-leaved vine, which had spread out into larger dimensions, and which clung to the basaltic pillars with an embrace so close, as to impress one with the idea, that to them alone did

it owe its life, and strength, and beauty. The whole scene assuredly was strikingly grand.

About one o'clock we all (*minus* Miss C—) mounted our horses, and proceeded to view the Barranca, or precipitous ravine which extends for many leagues in the direction of Tampico. In fact, I was told by all that the road hence to the province of Taumalipas and Tampico itself traverses one of the portions of Mexico most remarkable for its fine scenery. This was, indeed, the grandest of all our excursions. In proceeding to the Barranca, we rode for three or four miles over a beautiful table land, skirted on all sides by woods and hills. We then entered the wood which clothes the Barranca itself; and when at last we dismounted, and stood on the edge of the precipice, there lay a scene—far, deep, and perpendicularly below us—which beggars description. It was the narrow but cultivated vale through which flowed the meandering river. We had a bird's-eye view of all its windings; and we were told, that in going to Tampico by this valley, the traveller has to cross the river some thirty or forty times. The high precipitous banks were, as usual, one mass of foliage. The heat in the narrow valley below approaches

to tropical, and many of its productions are of such a clime. On the table land, the temperature approaches nearer to that of the frozen than the torrid zone. We sat on the culminating point of the Barranca, contemplating the lovely scene, which lay some six or seven hundred feet below us. The adventurous Captain Gros gathered flowers for H— from the precipice, a somewhat dangerous piece of gallantry. We then retraced our way to Regla, whence we set off on our return to the "Real." We visited Velasco (where we changed mules, and drank good Mexican ale); and at Sanchez we once more examined its great and well-appointed mining works. At six P.M., we arrived at Real del Monte, delighted with the day we had spent.

On Wednesday, the 22nd, the hum was heard of busy preparations for the grand event, to celebrate which Mr. Escandon had visited Real del Monte—the christening of Mr. and Mrs. Buchan's infant. In the absence of a Protestant clergyman, the curate was to officiate, our own Church accepting the baptism of the Roman Catholic, and *vice-versâ*. A splendid altar, profusely but tastefully adorned, was fitted up in the drawing-room; and Don

Manuel went to Pachuca, thence to escort *el Señor Cura*, whose absence in Mexico had delayed the ceremony.

At five, the company began to arrive; and by six we were all assembled in the drawing-room. At that hour in came the bustling curate, followed by the Prior of the Fernandino Monastery at Pachuca with an attendant friar. The room blazed with the wax candles on and around the altar, shining with gold and silver ornaments, mixed with others of porcelain, and I know not what; while, on either side, it was flanked with splendid flowers and green branches. The room was full—the passage filled with servants, retainers, and spectators; and, amid the congratulations and applause of all, Mr. Escandon standing godfather, little "Catherine" became a member of Mother Church. Don Manuel, after the ceremony, saluted his *comadre*, Mrs. B., and shook hands with his *compadre*; distributed to every one present a "*bolo*," which was a new gold dollar (worth 4*s*.); and then from the window, he scattered handfuls of *medios* (half-rials, silver, value 3*d*. each) to the crowd of men, women, boys, and girls, collected together for the scramble. Miss C—

was godmother, and according to etiquette, *her "bolo"* was a new *silver* rial. All friends coming near a *compadre,* on these occasions, are entitled to a *"bolo;"* so that I don't know how many dozens of golden dollars Don Manuel was called on to present.

At 7 P.M., twenty-two of us sat down to a capital dinner. A list of the dishes, as at a Lord Mayor's feast, would do ample justice to the housekeeping of our fair hostess; but, omitting that, I shall confine myself to a list of the company, which, considering we were in Real del Monte, is curious. There were Mr. and Mrs. Buchan, the happy father and mother; the *compadre* and *comadre;* Mr. Brenchley, a discriminating admirer of female excellence; "Don Cruz," so called at the Real, but *Anglice,* Captain Gros; the good-natured engineer, Mr. Arthur; the doctor of the establishment; our curate and the prior; the Marquis Floreci, and Mr. Petrowski, the manager at Sanchez; the *alcalde* or justice of the peace of Real del Monte; Mr. Woodfield, formerly of the *old* Real Company, now a gentleman at large; Mr. Chenowith, *employé,* and his amiable little wife; the judge of the district, and

a cousin of Mr. Escandon, both from Pachuca; Mr. Richard G—, and ourselves. These comprehended individuals born in Spain, Mexico, Peru, Italy, Poland, England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and Smyrna. I have only to add, that the evening was spent in great conviviality, not breaking up till midnight.

The company departed. Mr. G— and I (having to start long before daybreak), took leave of my now dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Buchan, both so justly beloved in their present home. All I could get Mrs. Buchan to charge me with, on my return to England, was, to pay a visit to her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. Auld. H— remained behind me, to enjoy herself for another week, and then to return with Don Manuel.

At half-past four in the morning, Mr. G— and I, accompanied by the judge of Pachuca, set off for that town, where we left him. At six we took our places in the *diligencia;* and, after a melancholy drive, I found myself once more in Mexico, at half-past two P.M.

LETTER XLI.

MR. BUCHAN'S REPORT OF REAL DEL MONTE.

[*London, 14th August*, 1852.

WHAT I have re-written on Real del Monte, during the present year, led me to request my friend, Mr. Buchan, to furnish me with a report on its actual state and prospects; and, having received it, I think such of my readers as are interested in mining affairs will thank me for inserting that report here. It shews, with much clearness and ability, how mining, the great source of the riches of Mexico, may be carried out, as a safe and profitable investment, instead of being, as it too generally is, a lottery, offering alternate prosperity and loss. I give Mr. Buchan's report *verbatim et literatim*, considering it to be of too great importance to be condensed, and too clear and luminous to be in any way altered.]

"*Real del Monte, April 4th*, 1852.

"My dear Sir,

"As you are about to publish some notes on your residence in this country, and tell me that your visit to Real del Monte is not omitted; perhaps a short sketch of the past history and present prospect of its mines, may not be uninteresting to you.

"Prior to the year 1749, but little is known of these mines, except that they had yielded considerable quantities of silver, from irregular and detached surface workings; and had at last become almost entirely abandoned from the impediment of water, as the excavations increased in depth.

"At the above period, Don Pedro Terreros, an enterprising merchant of Queretero, joined with an intelligent miner named Bustamante, in a general '*denuncio*' of the district; by which they obtained possession of its two principal veins, La Biscayna and La S^{ta} Brigida, on the condition of effecting their drainage by a long horizontal gallery for the exit of the water, and known in technical language as an adit.

"For this important work, a point was chosen sufficiently down the slope of the northern descent of the valley, to insure its entering the principal mines of the Biscayna vein, at the depth of two hundred yards from the surface; but as the distance necessary to obtain this difference of level was nearly 3000 yards, the work, although commenced in 1749, was not completed until 1759.

"Bustamante did not survive to see the result of his great work; but Terreros persevered to reap the reward, for having by this adit freed the mine from water, and thus rendered its workings economical, he extracted at comparatively small cost, up to his death in 1781, the large amount of fifteen millions of dollars; having been previously ennobled by the King of Spain, under the title of Conde de Regla.

"His successor, the second Conde, continued the working of the mines, but not to equal profit with his father; who having exhausted the upper portions of the veins, rendered dry by the adit, left his son the more difficult task of contending with the water under that level.

"This drainage was effected by horse machinery, called '*malacates*,' which raising the

water in skin bags to the level of running out at the adit, was for some time sufficiently effective; but gradually as the mine became deeper, the difficulty and cost of drainage with such imperfect machinery also augmented, until, in the year 1801, the twenty-eight *malacates*, then at work, occupying twelve hundred horses, with four hundred men, and costing 250,000 dollars per annum, were not found sufficient to keep down the water to 108 yards under adit, at which depth the workings on the Biscayna vein had been attained, in the mines of S^{ta} Teresa and Guadalupe: and consequently, although these mines were then producing at the rate of 400,000 dollars per annum, the drainage was suspended, and their deeper workings abandoned to fill with water.

"After this the workings were limited to a higher level, and on the hitherto unexplored extremes of the vein; in which directions, and up to 1809, when the second Conde died, the mines of San Ramon and 'Dios-te-Guie' continued to yield about 300,000 dollars per annum.

"From this period, the produce of the mines gradually decreased, and the war of Independence having commenced, their working was entirely

suspended in 1819, the total produce since the death of the first Conde being 10,000,000 dollars.

"After the independence of Mexico had been recognised by Great Britain, the attention of English capitalists became directed to the mines of this country; and at the suggestion of Mr. John Taylor, a celebrated mining engineer of London, an association, known by the name of the Real del Monte Company, was formed, for restoring and draining the mines of the Regla family.

"In July, 1824, when Captain Vetch, of the Royal Engineers, and the First Commissioner of of the Real del Monte Company, arrived at the mines, they were in a state of utter ruin; most of the vertical pits or shafts, which had formerly given access to their deep workings, had fallen in, leaving their former site only to be detected by the immense craters, overgrown with brush-wood at their mouths. A still more serious evil, was the destruction of the great adit, which having in many parts been carried through soft rock, requiring constant attention to support it with timber, had, during many years of neglect, gone so to ruin, that it no longer carried off the water, which consequently rose to a great height in the mines.

All the machinery in the large reduction works, formerly employed for extracting the silver from its ores, was gone, the population become very scarce, and the town nearly a ruin.

"As the chief inducement of the Company to resume the drainage of these deep mines was the advantage which they expected to derive by the substitution of steam power, applied to the modern system of pumps, for the imperfect and costly one of horse machines, raising water in skin bags,—a body of miners, engineers, and mechanics, with a number of steam engines, pumps, and other machinery, forming the cargoes of three ships of three hundred tons burthen each, arrived at Vera Cruz, in May, 1825, under the charge of Lieutenant, now Colonel Colquhoun, of the Royal Artillery, and then the Second Commissioner of the Company.

"Our experience of the climate of Vera Cruz was then but slight; and thus the worst possible season —the commencement of the rains—had been selected for the arrival of this expedition on that unhealthy coast. Another difficulty arose, for the Castle of San Juan de Ulloa being still in possession of the Spaniards, the port of Vera Cruz

was closed; and consequently while the ships anchored a few miles to the south, in the exposed roadstead of Sacrificios, the heavy machinery had to be landed, with very great risk and difficulty, on the open beach of Mocambo. Next came its transport to the interior, for which purpose the expedition had been very completely supplied with waggons and harness from the Royal Arsenal, at Woolwich; but the mules sent from the interior for draft were unbroken, and the Indians of the coast perfectly unused to their management; while the roads of deep sand rendered the movement of heavy waggons a most tedious and difficult task. The rainy season commenced, and its usual scourge, the yellow fever, soon made sad havoc with both English and Mexicans. Colquhoun, however, with the true spirit of a British officer, persevered through all difficulties, and by May, 1826, the engines had arrived at the mines.

"In the meantime, Captain Vetch had lost no time at Real del Monte, which district had been carefully surveyed; the great adit cleared and restored; many of the shafts, but particularly that of Dolores, on which it was decided to erect the first steam engine, had been repaired down to

adit; buildings, workshops, and stores were arising round the mines; many important new shafts for the future working and examination of the veins had been traced out, or commenced; and, though last not least in importance, a good carriage-road had been constructed, with much cost and great engineering skill, through the rocky ravine that intervened between the mines and reduction-works.

"From this period the clearing and restoration of the mines progressed slowly but steadily, until, by the end of 1829, the drainage had been effected to the depth of 108 yards under adit, by two small steam engines of thirty-inch cylinders, which discharged six hundred gallons of water per minute, and whose annual cost did not exceed 30,000 dollars, being an immense saving, as compared with the large sum of 250,000 dollars, which the twenty-eight *malacates* had cost the second Conde, when, at the same depth, he abandoned the lower workings on the Biscayna vein, in 1801.

"It, however, soon became evident, that the drainage, at the distant points of San Cayetano and Dolores, was not sufficiently effective for working downwards the richest portion of the vein, in the mine of S^{ta} Teresa, and that a new vertical shaft,

and more powerful engine, was absolutely necessary in that neighbourhood. To meet this difficulty, Captain Tindal, R.N., who had succeeded Captain Vetch in the direction of the Company, commenced, in January, 1830, the new shaft of Terreros; but the depth to which this pit had to be carried down to reach the old workings being 380 yards, it would have required many years to sink that distance, in hard rock, by only one drift from the surface. The saving of time being a matter of the greatest moment, it was determined to drive it at the same time from five distinct points, by bringing galleries from the old workings, and at different levels, to points directly under that which had been fixed for commencing the shaft at the surface, and then both rising and sinking from them. This operation, which is one demanding the utmost skill in mine-engineering, was happily concluded in January, 1834, by the joining of the eight ends, and forming as straight and perfect a shaft as if it had been driven only from the surface. An engine of fifty-four-inch cylinder having been erected, and assisted by the smaller ones at Dolores and San Cayetano, this portion of the Biscayna vein was worked for some time with considerable

profit, and to the great depth of 470 yards from the surface, or 240 yards under adit,

"At this point, the water having so increased as again to overpower the engine, Mr. John Rule (the successor of Captain Tindal) erected a still larger one of seventy-five inches at Dolores, and removed that of Terreros to another new shaft, which had been sunk with one of the thirty-inch engines, near the old mine of Acosta. The reward of these new adventures was two bunches of rich ore: the one discovered on the S^ta^ Brigida vein, near Acosta, and called La Luz; the other, San Enrique, on the Biscayna vein, near Dolores.

"Up to the end of 1847, however, the general result of working these mines had been decidedly unfortunate to the English adventurers; for although they had profited by the three rich bunches of ore at Terreros, Acosta, and Dolores, and had produced 10,481,475 dollars worth of silver; still the outlay on all the undertakings of the Real del Monte Company had also reached the larger amount of 15,381,633 dollars; leaving the great loss of nearly five millions of dollars, as the result of the twenty-three years they had held the mines.

"The deep workings of the mines were now

230 yards under the great adit, or 122 yards below the point in which they had been abandoned by the second Conde; and the difficulty of the drainage had so increased, both from the augmented quantity of the water, and the greater height to raise it to the point of discharge at adit, that the three powerful steam engines at Acosta and Dolores, which were discharging two thousand seven hundred gallons per minute, at a cost of 90,000 dollars per annum, could barely stem the coming water of the mine.

"To show what had been effected by English energy and enterprise, a comparison of the cost and effect of steam drainage, as compared with the plan of the country, becomes at this point interesting. As before shown, the English Company at the commencement had easily effected with two small engines, and with a cost of 30,000 dollars, what the Conde de Regla had been obliged to relinquish in 1801, with twenty-eight *malacates*, and at a cost of 250,000 dollars; but now with increased depth, and greater volume of water, three powerful pumping engines, spending 90,000 dollars, were barely able to maintain the drainage; while to replace *them* would have required at least

180 *malacates,* employing seven thousand horses, with upwards of two thousand men, and with an expenditure of not less than two millions of dollars per annum. In fact, not only from its cost, but from the number of men and shafts necessary to work so many machines, it would have been perfectly impracticable to have carried down the mine to its present depth by horse-power.

"With this increased difficulty of drainage, seeing three rich bunches of ore all worked out, and a debt of five millions of dollars still outstanding, it is not surprising that the energy and perseverance of the English adventurers, which had distinguished them since the year 1825, and through so long a period of heavy expenditure and hopes deferred, were at last exhausted.

"Towards the middle of 1848, I came here, at the request of the directors, to see what could be effected; and I certainly found affairs in a most critical state, from pending debts and liabilities, which had been incurred to a large amount, and at a heavy rate of interest, in the city of Mexico. Add to this, that the mines were producing far less than their expenditure, and that the company was involved in two very critical and costly

law-suits. Still I felt convinced, that the concern might be rendered a good one, if but a small capital could be supplied, for, at least, paying off its most urgent liabilities, and effecting some reform in its reduction-works; but the complicated interests of share and bond-holders, who represented the company, seemed to complete the natural despondency of all parties in London; and, rather than risk any farther capital, the English company was dissolved in October 1848, and I was directed by the trustees to dispose of the concern in this country.

"It was, however, no easy matter to find purchasers in the city of Mexico for mines which had fallen into such perfect discredit; and a still more difficult task to convince monied men, that an enterprise which, aided by all the energy and capital of a powerful English company, had, during the last twenty-three years, incurred a loss of five millions of dollars, and whose mines were now deep, poor, and working to the extreme extent of its powerful steam-engines, could be rendered profitable. I am, therefore, the more obliged to my friends, Don Manuel Escandon and Don Nicanor Beistegui, who, without being

miners themselves, reposed so much confidence in my technical opinion and judgment, as to come forward, under such discouraging circumstances, and, in May 1849, boldly take up the enterprise, on terms which, although not returning to the English adventurers much of their lost capital, at least relieved them from all farther responsibility.

"In a few words, I will now explain the grounds on which I was induced to take the responsible measure of inducing the present parties to enter on this extensive undertaking, and the manner in which, by the investment of further capital, I proposed to obtain for them a better result in future.

"After giving all due credit to my predecessors for the skill and energy with which their mining operations had been conceived and carried out—and fully admitting, that it is far easier to criticise results than to plan measures—it appeared to me, that the concern had hitherto been worked, as well on too limited a scale, as with too expensive an establishment; but particularly, that, without any effective attempt to render the poorer and more abundant ores available,

or to make new discoveries on the higher and still virgin portions of the veins, every effort had been directed to the search after rich ores in depth, which, when at last discovered, did not remunerate the large amount invested to find them. Experience had convinced me, that, to render an extensive mining enterprise like this secure, it should mainly depend on the poor and abundant ore of its veins for the current cost of exploring them; so that the richer bunches, which would occur in a regular and systematic process of working, might be found without any forced effort or outlay, and thus become more profitable. It was further clear, that, as certain costs, such as general management, drainage, rents to owners, etc., etc., were unavoidable, and nearly the same under any scale of operations, that a larger return of the poorer ores must be obtained, in order to support them; and, lastly, that a perfect system of economy, in every branch of so large an establishment, was most essential to its success.

"To carry out these views, I commenced by arranging the entire system of accounts on such a plan, that every week's result, in each mine

and reduction-work, might be clearly shown, and the economy of the different departments thus fairly compared against each other. To reduce the excessive cost of drainage, I abandoned (to some future and more favourable moment) the very deep workings on the Biscayna vein, and only maintained the water to 130 yards under adit, by one large steam-engine at Dolores; while, at the same time, the extraction of poor ores (which existed above this level in great quantities in the north and south veins of the Santa Brigida and Santa Iñez) was facilitated and increased by additional shafts, winding-machines, internal rail-roads, yards for picking and storing the ore, etc., etc.

"Conjointly with these operations, I selected the eastern and yet virgin portion of the Biscayna vein for the site of new trials, in high ground, above water-level. In making this choice, I was guided by the well-ascertained fact, that the former rich formation of ore, which had been worked to so much profit, from the Santa Teresa and Terreros shafts, was caused by the coming together of the Biscayna and another parallel vein, called the Tapona; and by my having ascertained,

by careful surveys, that another similar junction might be expected to the east of the old and once-celebrated mines of La Palma and San Ramon, then the furthermost workings in that direction. To solve this interesting mine-problem, I continued driving the great *adit* in that direction; a work which, as far as I can ascertain, had been discontinued since the time of the first Conde de Regla; and after passing through, as was calculated, a long portion of dead or unproductive vein, my expectations have been at last realised by the discovery of a new, and, as far as we can yet judge, very promising formation of ore. At present, being four hundred yards to the east of the nearest shaft, the ventilation is so bad, that, even with the aid of air-machines, we can with difficulty continue to work on a very limited scale; but, by the end of this year, we hope to communicate the *adit* with the new shaft of San Patricio, which, simultaneously with the under-trial, I commenced in that direction; and then there is little doubt of our having a perfectly new and good mine, with the very great recommendation of its being also a dry one.

"But the most arduous and costly part of my plan for returning a large quantity of poor ores, arose from the necessary extension of reduction-power, which the company then possessed on a very limited scale in the *haciendas* of Regla and Sanchez.

"I must here explain a peculiarity in the formation of the mineral veins of this district; that, while those which run in an easterly and westerly direction produce ores that are readily reduced by the usual amalgamation process, which is practised to so great an extent in this country; the ores from the north and south veins have quite a different mineral character, and, in many cases, cannot be made to yield their silver by this process. Trials at the *hacienda* of Sanchez having, however, proved that they could be advantageously reduced by a modification of the well-known system of barrels, as practised at Freiberg, in Saxony; and the great mass of poor ores on which we could count being of this character, I determined to adopt the barrel-amalgamation on a very large scale.

"For this purpose, my chief attention during the last two and a half years has been directed to

the erection of the two entirely new works at San Miguel and Velasco, as well as to enlarging and reforming those of Regla and Sanchez; a heavy and costly undertaking, which I am most happy to say is at last concluded, and these four large reduction-works are now in full operation. That of Regla, in addition to smelting all the richer ores that we are likely to obtain, can also amalgamate, by the *patio* or common country process, 800 *cargas* of ore per week, and which I count on soon supplying from the new eastern discoveries on the Biscayna vein; while the three other *haciendas* of San Miguel, Velasco, and Sanchez, can amalgamate, in barrels, 2700 *cargas* more of the abundant refractory ores, from the north and south veins.

"In the *haciendas* of San Miguel and Regla, which have been placed at a distance of twelve miles from the mines, in order to take advantage of a powerful stream which rises out of the ground in their immediate neighbourhood, water power is alone used to drive the extensive machinery, which is employed to blow the furnaces, grind the ores, or revolve the barrels; but at the *haciendas* of Sanchez and Velasco, which are built at the mouth of the valley descending from the mines,

and only depend on the limited quantity of water extracted by the engine from the veins, steam is also employed as an auxiliary power. So that besides the powerful pumping engine of 75 inch cylinder which drains the mines, we have now in motion at the reduction-works, two smaller rotatory steam engines, and eighteen water-wheels of different sizes, which drive 110 wet stampers or pounding mills; sixteen large "*arrastres*" and three edge-stone mills, all employed in grinding ores; besides revolving sixty-four large barrels, in which the prepared ores are afterwards amalgamated. In the *hacienda* of Regla, there are ten blast furnaces used for the smelting of rich ore when we can obtain it; and in San Miguel, Velasco, and Sanchez, thirty-six reverberatory furnaces, for drying and chlororising the ores preparatory to amalgamation in the barrels. Two of these furnaces at Velasco are revolving ones, which both feed, and rake the ore and salt, by machinery.

"Over and above the discovery of ore already alluded to, in the eastern ground of the Biscayna vein, we have also at Pachuca, a mine called Rosario, in very good produce; and in which, in

an adit driven to the junction of the Rosario vein, with the famous one of Xacal, a large body of good ore has been met with.

"My calculations, on commencing operations for the new adventurers, were as follows:—that returning 3000 *cargas* per week, of the poor but abundant ores of the north and south veins, from which an average produce of 4 to 4½ marks of silver per ton might be expected, would pay all cost, and a moderate interest on the new outlay that was necessary; leaving the probable chance of discovering richer ores, for increasing the profit.

"During the last two and a half years, and while augmenting our reduction-works, we have, besides those returned, and producing 1,683,713 dollars' worth of silver, also accumulated 90,000 *cargas* of these poor ores, and we are now extracting 3000 *cargas* per week; but owing to the superior class of those from Rosario mine, the average yield has increased to nearly six marks per ton, and our produce of silver to twenty bars, worth 20,000 dollars per week; which is likely to increase as soon as the new discovery on eastern Biscayna is ventilated and fairly worked.

"With this produce, I can confidently count on leaving a steady annual profit, of at least 200,000 dollars; which you will allow is no bad result for mines, which only three years ago were on the very verge of ultimate abandonment; while should our discoveries on the eastern ground of the Biscayna, or elsewhere, lead to the produce of any quantities of the rich ores, which this vein has yielded in other parts; our profits will of course be greatly increased.

"I have, as yet, omitted to mention, what in my opinion, is a work of the greatest interest, as one which would secure the continued prosperity of the mines of this district for many years to come. It will be remembered, that the first Conde de Regla distinguished himself, and made the fortune of his family, by driving the present adit or horizontal tunnel, which drained the mines of the Biscayna to the depth of two hundred yards from the surface, but that having exhausted all the known riches of the veins above that level, the second Conde had continued their excavations to a hundred and eight yards below it; being the limit to which they could be worked with profit by horse-power drainage.

"The English Company, by the powerful aid of steam, afterwards carried down these workings to more than double that depth, or 240 yards under adit; but here we find another limit to profitable working, as the deeper excavations on the Biscayna vein are again abandoned to fill with water. To Don Jose Castelazo, the mine-agent of the late, or third Conde de Regla, is due the credit of having planned and begun to work, in 1816, a second or deeper adit; which, commencing at the mouth of the valley, and near the small town of Omutlan, would enter and drain the mines, to 130 yards below the level of the present, or Conde's adit.

"It is true, that the great distance which this gallery had to be driven, of 4,500 yards from its mouth to Dolores' shaft, and that mostly through very hard rock, rendered it an undertaking of considerable time and cost to accomplish. Yet had it been actively and constantly persevered in by the English Company, and with the investment of but little more capital than that expended in applying larger steam engines, it would have long since reached the mines, and no doubt given a very different turn to the fortunes of that Company.

"When the working of the mines was resumed in 1825, their deepest pits were only 108 yards under the old adit; so that this *new* one would have laid the mines completely dry, and even have enabled them to be sunk below that level, on the same footing as the second Conde had worked below the first adit, with all the additional advantage of steam over horse power. But unfortunately the more speedy plan (as it was supposed) of carrying down the mine by dint of powerful steam engines, was adopted, in preference to the slower but surer one, of first driving home the deep adit; the progress of which, during the last twenty-five years, has been so slow, that about 3,000 yards are still wanting to reach the Biscayna.

"My present plan, for securing, in the first instance, the stability of the Company, has been to return with economy, and on an extended scale, the poor ores that are rendered accessible by the steam engine already erected and at work, making at the same time discoveries on the high and virgin extremes of the vein; but I also consider it of the greatest importance not to neglect the great work of the deep adit, which, besides laying the whole district dry to the depth of 300 yards,

with the great probability of making important discoveries on the many mineral veins to be intersected in its course, will also form quite a new era in the working of the deep mines of the Biscayna, by reducing their drainage-depth from 240 to 110 yards; and consequently rendering again highly profitable the workings which were abandoned in good ores at the bottoms of both Terreros and Dolores.

"At present we are only driving this deep adit (called the "Socabon Aviadora") from two points, and barely progressing at the rate of three yards per week; but as soon as other arrangements permit, we propose to push on this important work from two other intermediate points, by which means it would be completed in five years; and thus enhance, to a very great extent, the value of the mining property belonging to the new Real del Monte Company.

"Yours, my dear Sir, very truly,

"JOHN H. BUCHAN."

LETTER XLII.

THE MINES OF FRESNILLO.

[*London, August*, 1852.

BEFORE taking leave of the subject of mining in Mexico, I must here insert another though short report which I have received in Spanish, and translated, of the celebrated mines of the Fresnillo, analogous to those of Real del Monte; and showing how much may be *safely* done in mining with good management and economy, however uninviting the ores to be worked may be. It would, indeed, be well for the mining interests at large, as it appears to me, were operations adopted less speculative in their nature than the sanguine temperament of miners make them—something more reduced to a systematic business, such as is now established at Real del Monte and the Fresnillo. By seeking for rich ores, and despising poor ones, no doubt brilliant results are here and there now and then obtained; but it would appear that a steadier prosperity would

be insured by making poor ores the foundation of mining operations, obtaining from them the "daily bread," and so having continuous and certain means of steadily working into rich veins.]

NOTES ON THE AFFAIRS OF THE MINES OF FRESNILLO, IN THE STATE OF ZACATECAS.

It is known, by original documents, that the mines in the *Cerro* (or mountain) of Proaño, were occasionally worked from as early a date as the year 1617. In 1751, the works began to be carried on with less interruption, and very rich and abundant returns were realised over a considerable extent of ground. At this time, the administrator-general of these mines was Don N. Murguia, who left behind him very circumstantial accounts of the excellent state in which he abandoned them, for want of capital supplied by the person who then owned them, one Captain Don M. Muñoz, *protegé* of the old house of Aldaco, of Mexico. The mines were afterwards worked by various rich inhabitants of that city, but in so parsimonious a manner, that their works were never carried much beyond the surface. Murguia's accounts, however, were found to be

so very exact, that they led the government of Zacatecas to undertake and carry forward the draining and working of the mines from the year 1830 to 1835, when the general government leased them to the Zacatecano-Mexican Company.

This association was divided into 120 shares, or, as they were called, "*decimos de barra*" (tenths of a bar), equivalent to the twelve whole bars, or shares, ceded to the company by the government, which reserved to itself twelve bars more, or, in other words, the half of the mine, in quality of *aviadas*.* One condition of this contract was, that it should remain in force for twelve years; and another, that, besides the necessary sums expended in working the mines, the company should make a loan to the government of 1,300,000 dollars, repayable from one-third part of the profits; and, from both these obligations, sprung the enormous

* The usual custom is, to divide every mining business into twenty-four bars or shares: *barras aviadoras* are those which are ceded by the owners of the mine to others, on condition that, both for the time, and in perpetuity, they shall pay all the expenses of the working; while the *barras aviadas* are those which the owners reserve to themselves, and who, without any obligation to contribute towards the outlays, are entitled to their share of the profits, after deducting the expenses incurred by the *aviadores* in working the mines.

disbursement of 23,300 dollars for each of the 120 shares.

The *cerro*, or hill, of Proaño contains eighteen mines, the greater number of which have been worked by the Company in question; and this is at present done, beneficially, in five of the mines of considerable extent, called Barreno, Oscura, Beleña, Colorada, and Amarilla, whose several veins extend to five thousand *varas*, or Spanish yards, in length, while the Company preserves its works of discovery in such other mines as present the most favourable aspect, and from which indeed very satisfactory results are generally obtained. They have twenty-one adits (*tiros*) in good repair, and of different depths; among these, the most remarkable are of the Beleña and San Francisco mines, being the principal drains, and of the length of 450 *varas*. On these are placed two steam engines of the highest power in this country, with cylinders of eighty inches diameter, and capable of working, to good effect, down to 650 or 700 *varas*.

The Company possesses three reduction-establishments; viz., that of Guadalupe, with 48 *tahonas*,*

* These are circular mule-mills, or *arrastres*, with millstones to

or mills; of Rosario, with 16; and of the new and large one, erected at the foot of the hill, of 250 *tahonas*, and capable of containing in all 314. Here have been concentrated all the amalgamation works. In the factories, general buildings, machinery, stock, etc., etc., received by the Company on commencing its contract, or made and purchased since, about 1,500,000 dollars have been invested.

The new *hacienda* just mentioned, the largest and handsomest of any in the republic, is capable of being greatly enlarged, and of considerable improvement. It is at present intended to work the different mills in which the metals are crushed by steam, replacing with this powerful agent the large number of animals, which, up to this time, have been employed in the crushing. This very useful reform, for the realising of which an intelligent and practical engineer has arrived from England, will double the produce, with an incalculable saving at the same time. True it is, that

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crush the metal, and worked by one or two mules. The Company is about to put up twelve mills of a new kind, worked by steam, and which by this power will crush from 20,000 to 25,000 quintals of metal weekly. The steam engines will be constructed in the well-known establishment of Messrs. Harvey and Co., Hayle Foundry.

in no other *hacienda* has greater economy been practised, for the Fresnillo has contrived to make metals of the low average produce, of three marks, pay; a fact of which there is, perhaps, no other example in the mining history of the country.

Up to the end of 1837, the Zacatecano-Mexican Company had to make not only the disbursements, which the complete working of the mines required, but those to which they were bound by the loan to the government. In September, of the said year, the shareholders began to receive their dividends; and they continued to be paid without interruption, each successive year, up to the expiration of the twelve, which were stipulated as the duration of the first contract.

The produce of the Fresnillo, during the above time amounted to 21,356,353 dollars 73 cents, which, after covering the amount expended in setting up and furnishing the mines, amounting to 1,414,699 dollars, left a net profit of 3,357,463 dollars 25 cents.

As, during the course of the twelve years mentioned, the partners had acquired not only the perpetual property of the twelve *barras*, which the government had ceded to them, but the other

half of the enterprise, which had at first been reserved in quality of *aviadas*, there was formed in September, 1847, by the incorporation of one with the other, the new and present Zacatecano-Mexican Company, divided into 230$\frac{6}{8}$ shares, with perpetual and exclusive dominion over all that is comprehended in the vast business of the Fresnillo, as shown by deeds and documents, which solemnly guarantee the legitimacy of their titles of possession.

The produce of the enterprise, since the time mentioned, is stated in the following detail:—

From September, 1847, to December, 1849:—

	Dollars	Cts.	Dollars	Cts.
Produce	1,737,331	46		
Expenses	1,414,914	25		
Nett Profit			322,417	21
In the year, 1849:—				
Produce	1,398,386	68		
Expenses	980,384	33		
Nett Profit			418,002	35
In the year, 1850:—				
Produce	1,279,762	37		
Expenses	1,006,209	91		
Nett Profit			273,552	46
			1,013,972	02

Of these sums the following have been distributed among the shareholders :—

	Dollars	Cts.
From September, 1847, to December, 1848	402,687	00
In all 1849	346,227	40
In all 1850	207,685	80
	956,600	20

In concluding these notes, it is proper to state, that the *haciendas*, offices, and houses of the company—the steam-engines and other machinery in use—the effects and stock, of which a vast amount is always on hand—and the large number of animals occupied in mining labours—represent fairly a value of more than a million and a half of dollars; that, in the court of the principal *hacienda*, there are always, in ordinary times, from three to four thousand heaps of metal, of twenty *quintals* each, ready for crushing, with, at least, twelve or fifteen hundred *marks* of silver, of the value of from one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars: in fine, that there is an abundant supply of every thing which can be required for the working and the labour of so large a business, in which upwards of three thousand persons are employed.

As may be seen by the foregoing data, the Fresnillo mines have given rich returns. Its metals, although of low produce, are so abundant, or rather, it may be said, so inexhaustible, its administration is so economical and so well regulated, and all its circumstances are so analogous with a well-conducted mercantile or industrial undertaking, that it is not subject to the ordinary vicissitudes of mining affairs. It may, accordingly, be asserted, that the Fresnillo will continue to give to its shareholders an annual income of, at least, from three hundred to four hundred thousand dollars.

PART V.

REVIEW OF MEXICO.

LETTER XLIII.

THE CITY AND THE DESERT.

Mexico, 24th Sept., 1849.

THE time of our leaving Mexico, and our many kind and hospitable friends, and of breaking up the truly agreeable society which we have enjoyed here, is now drawing near. Indeed, we have already lost our two principal "*Tertulianos*," and one of our most agreeable friends. By the packet of the 13th of July, Mr. Falconnet and the Marquis de Raddepont took their departure; and Mr. B—, on the 31st of August, commenced a tour on a scale not much known in Europe. He was to proceed, by the City of Tepic, to the ports of San Blas and Mazatlan, on the Pacific. Thence by steamer, he was to coast the whole of that ocean, touching at Acapulco, Panama, and Guayaquil, remaining some time in Lima; and on, by the intermediate ports of Peru (Pisco, Arica, Islay, etc.), to Coquimbo and Valparaiso,

in Chili. From the capital of this republic, Santiago, Mr. B— proposed crossing the Córdillera de los Andes, and the Pampas, to Buenos Ayres; thence to Brazil, on to the West Indies, and home by the United States. The whole, including a view of all that is most interesting in the republic of Mexico, may be done comfortably within the year; thus visiting almost every country and people in the whole of the Southern Hemisphere. To those who can spare the time and the money, having at the same time a moderate intrepidity and earnestness of character, I recommend Mr. B—'s nice little trip, as the most useful, instructive, and suggestive, that can be undertaken.

Well! we have now arranged as to the mode, form, and time of our own departure; and my Mexican commission being closed, so far as I can arrange it in this country, I have ten or twelve days on my hand, for pleasure and travel. But two or three more letters, and not long ones, must suffice to chronicle what I have yet to say of the city, plain, and people of Mexico.

Mr. B—'s departure was preceded by two pleasant dinner parties, given on the occasion.

Of one, by our host, Mr. M., I will say nothing more than that it was at once a pleasant and a handsome affair. Of the other banquet I must say a few words more, because it came off at the principal hotel in Mexico. It is called the Hotel de Compagnon—it is the Mivart's of the city. Here Mr. Falconnet and Mr. B. had their apartments during their stay; and here the latter gave a dinner, "*de despedida,*" to his friends, two days before his departure.

Before the establishment of the Compagnon, the city of Mexico was very poorly off for a good hotel. The Spanish people are noted for their bad inns; and their transatlantic descendants have not much redeemed the character of their fathers. I did not see one really *comfortable* inn or hotel in Mexico, save the Compagnon; the second in rank being that of La Gran Sociedad. The enterprising founder of the new dynasty of hotel-keepers has done his work well, and it pays him well. The house is well furnished, the rooms good, the service very fair, and the creature comforts provided are not to be despised. The dinner got up at the hotel for Mr. B— was as excellent a one as a *bon vivant* could desire, and the wines

of every kind were exceedingly good. The general charges I thought very moderate for an expensive place like Mexico; and accordingly I recommend all travellers, who are looking out for a *good* hotel in the city, to bend their steps to the Compagnon.

During part of Mr. B—'s stay, he had one discomfort, which was but temporary. The town was suddenly filled with great musicians; Bochsa, Mrs. Bishop, Herr Coenen (a splendid violinist) Mr. Douglas, a *black* one, and two or three others of less celebrity. Their individual rehearsals were all at the hotel; so that sounds, however pleasing in solo development, fell in such discordant mixture on Mr. B—'s ear, that morning after morning he had no alternative but to leave the field of battle in possession of the din-stirring enemy.

We found, as the day of the packet's sailing approached, we were likely to have many Mexican passengers; and some of them attached to my own party. In particular, I engaged to take a widow lady and her family, consisting of an unmarried sister, and two daughters, nine and eleven years of age, under my charge from Vera Cruz to London.

The charge was an onerous one; but Mrs. Landa was connected with Mr. Escandon. She was going to take charge of her only son; left unprotected in Spain, by the accidental drowning of Mr. Landa, while bathing in the sea. I could not therefore hesitate; though when I considered that those under my charge were to travel through the United States in winter; and that they had never gone farther beyond the city of Mexico than Tacubaya, where Mrs. L— had a very pretty establishment, I could not help feeling dubious as to the results of the new, unimagined, and tempestuous course, into which these poor ladies and children, all of delicate health, were about to plunge.

Up to the time of agreeing to take Mrs. Landa and her family under my wing, neither H— nor I had seen any of them. The matter was arranged with Don Jose Landa (Mrs. L—'s brother-in-law), one of our nicest friends; and of whom, as brother-in-law also of Mr. Escandon, we had had an opportunity of seeing much, during the latter part of our stay.

But it was necessary now to make Mrs. Landa's acquaintance; and to that effect she asked Mr.

and Mrs. Mackintosh and ourselves, to dine with her, and some of her near relations, in her own house at Tacubaya. So we went on the 15th (September), and were entertained in excellent taste and style. Mrs. L— we found a very lady-like person, with a quietness of demeanour approaching to sadness; no doubt increased by her recent heavy and most unexpected bereavement, under the melancholy circumstances of the case. I argued, however, from her calm and placid way, a passive resistance, which would get her well through her coming troubles. The little Misses Landa were amiable, and, evidently, very well brought up.

After we had spent a quiet but agreeable evening at *la Viuda* Landa's, H— and I went, under Don Manuel Escandon's care, to his brother, Don Joaquin's villa, at Tacubaya; not at present inhabited by him. It is one of the many handsome country-houses of the Mexican gentry. The view from it is superb, and the garden rich and luxuriant in its flowers; but above all in its roses. We slept at Don Joaquin's, and at six, next morning, were enjoying the freshness of the air, and the beauty of the scene. We called on the

Count Cortina, and viewed his house and grounds, which, also, are very fine.

The 16th of September is the anniversary of the Independence of Mexico; and the great National trumpet proclaimed a mighty holiday. The Alameda was brushed up, seats and walks were cleaned, statues were whitewashed, and fountains were set playing. Garlands were hung about in profusion; the great town awning was spread from the plaza to the Alameda gate; in the morning, boom went the cannon, and up flew the rockets. In the forenoon were high mass, grand procession—president, ministers, municipality, guards, militia, regulars, bands of music, and citizens—harangues from great men, huzzas from little boys—windows and balconies crowded with beauty — streets thronged with *leperos*—flags, muslin curtains, flowers, everywhere. In short, one would have thought that the people had really something *worth while to celebrate*, in keeping alive the remembrance of their Independence. Alas! I could not but fear that it might all be likened to the heralded and escutcheoned pomp and parade of high and mighty funereal obsequies. Grandeur to the eye,

but on lifting up the shroud—*death,* in all its pallor.

In the evening we went to Mr. G—'s house; the balconies of which look into the Plaza, where there was a grand display of fireworks. The scene was both animated and beautiful. On the massive dimensions of the fine cathedral just opposite to us, deep shade and brilliant light were so happily divided, as to appear the work of premeditated art; not the casual effect, as it was, of the glare from the lights of the Plaza, falling on the fronts and projecting towers and divisions, while others fell into the shade. Much order prevailed amid the dense and motley crowd; and the day concluded to the apparent satisfaction of the worthy citizens.

On Tuesday, the 18th, we had lightning, which frightened many, and nearly blinded me. We have had, during the last four or five weeks, a good many of the heavy rains which constantly fall during this, the rainy season: yet not nearly to the extent, we are told, of ordinary years. In fact, there has not been much more rain than was agreeable, the roads still inclining sometimes to dust rather than to mud.

On the 19th, Wednesday, we had a call from Mr. Herz, who has made both noise and money here, by having himself proclaimed in every possible and impossible manner, the prince of piano performers. The concerts have been famously attended; but Coenen, the violinist, who accompanies him, has been the most attractive of the two.

On Thursday, the 20th, we had "a day at Cuajamalpa, and the desert." Mr. Escandon provided a diligence for the occasion; and at half-past eight, it left his door with himself and his brothers Joaquin and Antonio, Mr. Bringas, Mr. T—, our British *attaché*, Mr. Mariner, from the interior, and Messrs. L— and G—, H— and myself. Mr. G— had sent off his servants at an earlier hour, with all the necessaries of a Mexican breakfast, to be consumed at the *fête champêtre*. An excursion of this kind is called a "*dia de campo*"—a day in the country, as it really is; and therefore the viands include all that is united in a "*dejeuner à la fourchette*," an Ascot provision, and a pic-nic. I added to the numerous delicacies provided for the occasion, a barrel of punch-royal; one-half of which our driver contrived to spill in the street, by

turning the barrel downwards, and shaking the peg out.

We set off in high spirits, the road going through Tacubaya, from which point the ascent to Cuajamalpa is continuous. As we rose above the the valley, the beauty of the views and of the country increased; and after passing a little place called Santa Fé, we arrived at a very long and steep hill leading to Cuajamalpa. At the bottom of this ascent we all got out of the diligence (saving H— and Messrs. Joaquin Escandon, and Bringas) and walked to Cuajamalpa. The road was very fine, but the great rarefaction of the air, made the walk somewhat toilsome, the distance being from two to three miles. I enjoyed it, nevertheless, very much, and at half-past eleven we arrived at Cuajamalpa, which is a large inn, with some small houses scattered about it, and the first stage on this road from Mexico.

Here it began to rain, which obliged us to change our plan. The people gave us a capital room, clean, large, and airy,—not the *traveller's* room, but the private *sala* of the family. David (Mr. G.'s butler) here laid out his sumptuous breakfast (we *ought* to have taken it at the

Desierto) and, I assure you, we all did it ample justice.

At one, the day being now fine, we set off for the Desert, which you must not fancy is a bare and arid plain. The ruined convent, to which we directed our steps, is situated in a beautiful and verdant wood.

The walk to it (H—, Mr. Bringas, and Don Joaquin were on horseback, all the rest of us on foot), is the most romantic you can imagine. It is along a wooded *barranca*, skirting a deep and magnificent glen, which lies beneath you. The wood is composed of the finest forest trees, principally of the pine family, and the "woodman's stroke" resounded in divers parts. Two miles brought us to the bottom of the glen, through many a winding path; and then once more ascending to the opposite height, or *barranca*, we had the road by which we had come, just facing us, with the glen lying between.

All at once we came upon the ruins, situated on an open bit of table land, but surrounded by woods. The convent was originally one of the finest hereabouts, and was finished in the year 1616. The walls and the corridors are all still

standing with their roofs; though of most of the rooms, the bare walls only remain. So of the cloisters. Along these long corridors, the walls of which are covered with names of visitors written with charcoal, we advanced to the chapel, which, though dilapidated, with all the windows gone, maintains its lofty roof unimpaired. It was once a splendid structure. It was here we had intended to breakfast; but our leader's good sense had been shewn in exchanging a picturesque banqueting room for a comfortable one.

On the walls, names, sentences, and verses abounded in thousands: and (not to be behind our neighbours) Mr. L—, mounted on the shoulders of two sturdy Indians, with extended arms, and charcoal in his hand, wrote on the wall, twelve or thirteen feet from the ground,

H. ROBERTSON.
WM. PARISH ROBERTSON.
JOAQUIN ESCANDON.
MANUEL ESCANDON.
AND THEIR FRIENDS.

We next proceeded to inspect the vaults which ran completely round the whole quadrangular building. Three or four of the Indians with us

lighted our way with huge blazing faggots of resinous pine. What an interminable range of deep, dark vaults and dungeons! What massive walls to divide one from another! Some were used during the time of the monks, we were told, as penitentary prisons, some as cellars: and certainly for deeds of darkness — for fanatical vengeance—for the imposition of lingering human suffering—nothing could be either more appropriate or more complete. The mind shuddered as fancy conjured up all the terrible scenes which these dungeons must have witnessed, and all the groans of despair to which their walls must have listened. It was a relief to the spirits to emerge once more into open day.

At some distance from the convent, and at the bottom of what had once been extensive gardens, now tangled with underwood and trees, stood a large alcove. Thence we walked round the convent, and read the tablet fixed on one of the walls, which bore witness to the date of the completion of the buildings. Next we contrived to get on the parapet of one of the domes, whence we had a splendid view of the surrounding country. Descending once more to the chapel, we found our

caterer standing in the centre with a basket containing glasses, pastry, and loads of ice; while the barrel, containing the punch, stood at his side. It seemed delicious after all our rambles and researches. We found we had a superabundant supply both for ourselves and servants, and our party brought the scene at the Desert merrily to a close.

We now resolved, instead of returning to Cuajamalpa, to proceed down the gorge of the whole Barranca, about six miles in length, emerging from it a league nearer Mexico than the post-house. Messengers were despatched to order the diligence to go on to the point at which we were to come out; and H—, Mr. Bringas, and Don Joaquin once more on horseback, the rest of us on foot, set off to traverse this most beautiful of glens. L— put a bottle of brandy in his pocket, and M— armed himself with a tumbler from the butler's stock.

The beauty of that glen! it is in vain to attempt to paint it—you must just imagine everything most exquisite in wooded scenery, and then you have it. Our path was narrow, and so rugged that H—'s horse was led all the way by the

gallant Mr. T—. Our whole way lay along the clear and rapid stream, which, over its rocky and pebbled bed, fretted its way. The noise of the waters was music to the ear; and I think they were most particularly grateful to the jolly Mr. M— at those points where we halted by the rivulet side, and where, seated on the broad flat rocks, we drew crystal water from the stream, and sparkling cognac from the bottle, to assuage the thirst caused by our long and warm, though truly splendid walk.

And when at last, to gain the main road, we mounted a steep ascent from the valley, and suddenly stood on a high table-land, what a scene burst on my astonished view! The sun was descending on the most lovely of all tropical evenings —the light perfect but soft—the air balmy but cool. On one side, in a single *coup d'œil,* I got the whole winding glen through which we had passed, with wooded hills, one range rising above another, as they receded in the distance. The Barranca itself is three or four hundred feet deep —all wooded. On the other side, stretched away the great valley of Mexico, the wonder and glory

of this splendid country; cultivated, planted, green, dotted with haciendas, and in the centre the city of Mexico, with its towers, and spires, and palaces, glittering in the rays of the setting sun. Beyond, lay the semi-circle of lower mountains, and, verging on the horizon, the great snow mountains, Iztaccihuatl and Popocatepetl, rearing their hoary heads to the clear blue sky, and also illumined by the sun's now softened light! I was rivetted to the spot: I waved to Don Manuel to go on, and before I could force myself to the carriage, my friends were half angry and half amused with the way in which I had delayed them.

We had an accident going home, which detained us upwards of an hour. As we approached the *garita*, or city gate, leading into the *Paseo nuevo*, Mr. T—'s horse, ridden by his servant, shied violently, and leaped right into the wide, deep ditch running along the road, and filled with water. The poor fellow scrambled out—the horse remained—and being a favorite one of Mr. T—'s, he, with two or three others jumped out of the diligence to assist in pulling the animal out.

This was effected with difficulty; and nine o'clock had struck, when we joined Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh at the dinner-table.

Thus ended our Desierto excursion; one of the pleasantest we have had in Mexico.

LETTER XLIV.

CITY SIGHTS AND COUNTRY QUARTERS.

On Friday we were a good deal taken up preparing for our departure, as the *arrieros*, who take our principal luggage are twenty days on the road from this to Vera Cruz. On Saturday night we went to Herz's very last concert, his *real* last one; for we have had three *sham* "last" ones; and it was moreover called a monster concert. We had some good playing, and bad singing, and at the end they gave us the new national hymn composed by Herz; performed by two orchestras, seven pianos, played by thirteen professors, a chorus, and Mr. Herz with variations. Great was the noise, great the applause, and great my pleasure when we got home.

Yesterday, Mr. L— gave a grand morning

party, as a leave-taking to H—and myself. I have spoken of him before, and his pretty residence at Tisapan, five leagues from this. He made up a gay party of sixteen (including the Misses A—, one a celebrated and *good* musician) to meet us; and after all I was taken ill. So I sent H— under the protection of Mr. G—, who spent a very pleasant day.

To comprehend better the modes, habits, and customs of the people here, I have, among other things, witnessed some of their religious ceremonies. Plenty there are of them; for each church, on the anniversary of its saint's-day, has its *great* go, with a vast variety of *little* intermediate goes.

Monday was the fête-day of Nuestra Señora de las Mercédes; and her church is one of the most noted in the city; while the "*Mercedario*" friars are among the most celebrated of the monkish orders here.

I mentioned to you, that Mrs. Mackintosh, H— and I went, on Sunday evening, 23rd, to see the *Mercedario* fireworks; for the operations commence on the eve of the great day itself. The coach could not advance for the dense crowd in the streets immediately surrounding the great pile of

the *Merced* church and convent. So I got out, determined to penetrate the throng. What an assemblage! Two-thirds were *leperos*—the remaining third a mixture of all the other classes, saving the very highest. I rubbed against rags and tatters and half-naked bodies all the way. Men, women, and children were huddled together, and pushing to and fro. The houses were illuminated generally with lanterns, placed in the windows; and on either side of the streets were ranged men and women, with heaps of every kind of comestible—fruits, and many horrible-looking things in the sweet line, for sale. They plied an active trade; but I could no more understand their incomprehensible cries, than how they contrived to keep the populace off their street-strewed stands.

I got to the church, and entered with the in-going stream, buffeting with the outcoming. It was grandly lit up, particularly the great altar. The images, of which there were many, large and small, were all decked out in their most splendid habiliments; the priests were in their gorgeous appointments; their assistants in all their characteristic dresses; and prayers were going on, accompanied

by a fine organ, a band of music, and a full choir.

I found the church full of *leperos,* and women of different classes; some in the aisles, many squatted in the body of the church, either talking to one another, or attending to the priests.

With great difficulty I fought my way out on leaving the church, through the crowd which surrounded it; particularly at two intersecting streets, where stages were erected in the centre, for bands of music; to listen to which the people were packed together in almost impenetrable masses. I got back to the carriage which was waiting for me outside the crowd, and we saw not the fireworks.

Next morning was the grand procession; which I went to see. The crowd was still greater than overnight, and all the windows and balconies were filled with spectators. What I could not comprehend well, was to see a great number of boys and men on the *tops* of the houses, waving pocket-handkerchiefs tied as bundles, and containing (to me) unknown substances. A line was kept open for the procession; and an immensely long string of ragged, dirty boys walked along each side of

the line with candles. In the centre were men, with coarse church ornamental coverings, who carried banners, crosses, and so forth. Then came music, next padres or friars; and last the virgin, elevated on a large and profusely decorated platform. Her dress was a blaze of silver and gold; and her stand moved on, supported on the shoulders of twenty strong men. As it neared me, the object of the pocket-handkerchiefs became apparent; for at each house which the virgin passed the bundles were swung round, three of the corners were let go, and out flew thousands of pieces of coloured paper, round and oval, of the size of this page, with dried flower leaves; all which being let loose, filled the air, and then descended in showers on the virgin's moving altar. At one place a rope extended from two opposite *azoteas;* and as soon as the image approached, off flew a boy from one side, dressed as an angel, with a glittering helmet; then gliding along the rope to the centre of the street, and there hanging over the virgin as she passed, he let go an enormous bundle of papers and flowers. The band played, the bells rung, rockets went up, and all was a scene of hubbub the most complete.

It was in the midst of this that my watch, which was in my waistcoat pocket, secured by a gold chain 'round my neck as usual, was neatly cut away, without the slightest perception of the *coup de main* on my part; and one for which I was all the less prepared, as to avoid pocket-handkerchief robbery (never dreaming of my watch-chain being cut), I had taken my place in the centre of a knot of monks, who walked with the procession.* Certain it is, however, that I returned from the procession *with* my chain and (thanks to the dexterity of the *lepero* pickpockets) *without* my poor old watch, which I had worn for twenty-five years.

On Thursday, the 27th, we had the anniversary of the real independence of Mexico, which was effected by Yturbide, first the patriot, afterwards the emperor, next the proscribed, and then the martyr on his return from England. He is *now* deified as the hero of the revolution.† Great doings again in

* I was afterwards assured, that it was no uncommon case for *leperos*, in such processions, to assume the garb of the friar, and so to facilitate their operations.

† His body was removed from the place where he was shot, to the cathedral of Mexico, with a pomp vying with that which accompanied the remains of the Emperor Napoleon when brought to France. (See Frontispiece, Vol. I.)

the way of processions, public harangues, music, promenading and illuminations. In the evening, H— and I went to a farewell party, given to us by Mr. G—; a most pleasant affair, with some capital singing by Miss A—, known among her intimates as "Natcha," and without dispute one of the most charming belles of Mexico. She sang some of the little national, as well as Spanish airs—comic —with inimitable grace and fun. We had a splendid supper—many toasts and speeches—and we separated at half-past one.

According to previous engagement, we set off, on Saturday at 3 P.M., for San Mateo, one of the estates (*haciendas*) and principal *seat* of Don Joaquin Escandon. We went in a diligence, drawn by four large, black, and beautiful North American horses (*frisones*). Our party consisted of the three brothers Escandon, Mr. Doyle, our *Chargé d'Affaires*, Mr. T—, *Attaché of the Legation*, Mr. W—, American *Chargé d'Affaires*, Mr. Bringas, H— and myself. The drive was pretty as far as Tanepantla, a small town four leagues from Mexico; and from that to the hacienda, two leagues farther, it was beautiful. We found ourselves in one of the finest parts of this splendid valley.

Many of the houses of the haciendas here are rough and dilapidated: Don Joaquin's is exactly the reverse—a beautiful country seat, kept in the finest order. Passing through an avenue of well-grown trees, you enter the *patio*, and ascend by a handsome flight of steps, adorned on either side by trees and shrubs, to the principal corridor, one hundred feet in length, and sixteen feet in width.

The parterre is redolent of flowers in pots and vases. The *patio* is immensely spacious; the rooms all very fine, as you may suppose, the house having a frontage of one hundred feet; while the views on every side are magnificent.

At seven, we sat down to a capital dinner and excellent wines; and all retired early, to be ready for an excursion on horseback early next morning. All our horses, saddled, had been led out from town by Mr. Escandon's grooms.

We were mounted by half-past seven, and proceeded through scenery, now wild, now cultivated, always romantic, to Don Joaquin's *adjacent* estate, called the *Lecheria*, or dairy estate. The family never resides there, but the house and buildings

are of enormous extent. It has a pretty chapel, where mass is regularly said.*

We returned by a different and still more beautiful road (always in Don Joaquin's grounds) to San Mateo, and after a fruit and iced champagne lunch, we had an afternoon ride through new scenery. Towards sun-set we walked in the gardens, very extensive and prettily laid out. At half-past seven dinner — at ten a display of fireworks — and, returning this morning all on horseback, for the weather was enchanting, by quite another road, Mr. T—, an old hand, declared he had seen nothing to surpass the beauty of the scenery, even in the beautiful valley of Mexico. It is indeed most surprising—most incomprehensible to know that this Mexico is *going to decay*, when one sees such proofs on every hand of its natural and acquired riches. Let me mention, as one instance of the latter, that on our way home this morning, we visited a flour-mill, the property of a rich Mexican family, and to give you at once an idea of its enormous extent and importance, I have

* On the grounds is a grand *represa de agua*—a reservoir—solidly built with stone, at a very large cost of money.

only to say that it yields its proprietors a hundred thousand dollars — twenty thousand pounds of annual income! They have just erected *additional* buildings fitted up with English machinery, at a cost of seventy thousand dollars, yet it is not *one sixth part* of the entire buildings; including mills, warehouses, granaries, flour stores, dwelling-houses, stabling, and I know not what other out-houses.

We arrived in the city at nine this morning, delighted with our trip, and more and more gratefully alive to all the disinterested kindnesses which we had received, and were receiving at the hands of Don Manuel Escandon, and the various members of his family.

LETTER XLV.

MISCELLANEOUS NOTICES AND REMARKS.

Mexico, Sept., 1852.

I HAVE stated, in one of my former letters, that I should reserve for my concluding pages some miscellaneous observations on a few of the more remarkable points (not yet mentioned) which Mexico presents to the view of the traveller. My matter, meantime, has swelled into a bulk so much greater than I anticipated, that I can only glance at some further particulars which I think may prove interesting. You will readily perceive, at the same time, that the scope of this slight work could never, in its very nature, include more than mere sketches of Mexico and its people; for anything beyond that, required in the first place, a more lengthened residence, a closer examination than mine; and, in the second, that coming after other, and recent publications, of a more elaborate nature, I should run the risk of

tiring, rather than ensure a certainty of instructing my readers.

This premised, I shall now, in a cursory way, proceed to fulfil my allotted task.

Of the churches of Mexico, I have not much to add to what I have already said. The principal of them having been mentioned in my account of the Semana Santa, viz: the cathedral, San Francisco, San Augustin, Santo Domingo, La Profesa, Santa Teresa, and Santa Teresa la Nueva; to which may be added a long list of secondary temples, which it would be tiresome to detail.

All the churches in Mexico, great and small, are in their interior fitted up always with a showy, sometimes with a gorgeous, but often with a gaudy magnificence. The total amount of money laid out in gildings, carvings, plate, dresses, and jewellery, could it be calculated, would be something incredible, and only to be accounted for by the fact that all this exterior show of religion ministers to the strongest passion, perhaps, which the Mexicans, as devout Catholics, entertain.

With respect to the nunneries (the two finest of which, are "La Encarnacion" and "La Con-

cepcion"), of course, I can say very little; for to me, as to the great generality of persons, they are a sealed letter; and with regard to the friars, as far as I could observe, they are pretty much the same here, as in Spain, and its other trans-atlantic ex-colonies. The clergy enjoy a very fair reputation among the Mexicans themselves; but justice compels me to say, that, as the prime movers of the highly intolerant religious spirit which pervades Mexico from one end to the other, I look upon the clerical body at large, as forming the chief barrier against the advancement of Mexico in the scale of nations.

Although I have just stated that the nunneries are a sealed letter to all comers, I must make, as regards myself, one exception to this general statement; for you will be rather surprised to hear that I breakfasted one morning in a nunnery, and a very remarkable one too, being that of *Las Monjas Indias*, or the Indian nuns. I must give you some short account of our visit.

Some particular occasion arose, I think an annual one, when the bishop had to make a visitation of the nunnery, at which time, the abbess

generally invites him and some of his friends to a morning repast. Mrs. Mackintosh very kindly got H— and myself included in this year's invitation.

The nunnery is situated in a distant and poor quarter of the city, and is not to be spoken of as a public building. Within, all is plain and homely, but clean; and indicative in its details of the class to which the asylum is appropriated.

The door was opened by a "sister," and by her we were conducted to the Lady Abbess. Many other nuns were about, and they proceeded to show us over the convent. They were all habited in a coarse black dress, with a wholly impervious veil thrown over the head and face; and how they contrived to see through it, I cannot comprehend. We observed, however, when they had any particular object to search out or look at, they contrived so to adjust the veil as to attain their object, without those around being able to see them any the better. They seemed to be all kind, simple creatures; talkative, communicative, and full of every-day gossip. Most of them appeared to me to have passed the prime of life; and indeed many of them talked to me of the great

number of years they had been in the convent. Some of them were quite affectionate in their manner with both H— and myself, calling her "Hermanita," and me "Padrecito" at every turn. They showed us all over the establishment, the chapel, the gardens, and various offices. The endowment is very poor, but the *Monjas Indias* seem to be quite content with their lot. The abbess, as might be expected, was of a superior character to the others.

About twelve o'clock we sat down in the Refectory, to a "*dejeuner à la fourchette*," composed of dishes purely and exclusively Mexican; indeed I have seen nowhere so curious and so characteristic an exhibition of the *cuisine* of the country, as on this occasion. The *chef d'œuvre* was, the Mólé de Guajalote, which was pronounced to be quite faultless. This, as well as the other dishes, most of them redolent of garlic, would have made many a Londoner stare. We all, notwithstanding, made a most excellent breakfast.

The bishop sat at the head of the table, and did the honours of it most gracefully. He was bland in his manners, full of *savoir faire*, and through

his kindly nature there ran a vein of wit and humour, which rendered his conversation irresistibly attractive. Near to him sat the Abbess, and around several important personages of the City. The nuns waited with assiduity and apparent pleasure upon the company, although they were not destined themselves to partake of any of the good things which were going. They exhibited to us, before we went, specimens of their own dietary, a purely vegetable one, and of the coarsest products, most plainly prepared, of the kitchen garden. Such was the *Convento de las Monjas Indias;* and I saw nothing in Mexico which pleased me more.

Mexico boasts of a number of very fine public edifices and buildings; and I am sorry I can do little more than enumerate most of them. Of the Cathedral and the Casa de Mineria I have already spoken, and of both as of the highest order of merit. Of the Palace also, I need say no more than I have already done; and the principal theatre, not remarkable as a building, has heretofore come under review. The bull-ring has fallen into desuetude, and now has only the appearance of a great heap of ruinous wooden buildings.

One of the most prominent, and, at the same time, most interesting of the public establishments of the capital of Mexico, is the university or *museum*. It is a fine old solid piece of architecture, with much of monastic gloominess, but very imposing. It forms, like all the other buildings, a great quadrangle; and its various and lofty apartments are rich in monuments of the Astec dynasty, and antiquities of every kind; many of them unique, all interesting. Mr. Branz Mayer devotes a space equal to fifty or sixty of these pages, to the Museum and its contents, and to him I must refer the antiquarian reader.

In the centre of the great *patio* of the museum, stands the Colossal equestrian figure of Charles IV., cast by the celebrated Tolsa, the architect of the Casa de Mineria. The statue is a noble work of art, equalled by few of its kind; and it is a thousand pities it has been removed from the Great Plaza which it formerly adorned; and where all its fine proportions and grand outline were seen to the greatest advantage.

In the museum is now also deposited the famous *sacrificial stone*, on which the human victims of the Astecs were immolated by their priests. I may

here also observe, that the *gladiatorial stone*, used for the sacrifice of warriors taken in battle, still lies buried in the great square, although Mr. Mayer gives a plate of it in his work: and, finally, I have to notice, that the ancient Mexican calendar—also a round carved stone, and which, in the opinion of the best antiquarians, was the *tonalponalli*, or "solar reckoning of the ancient Mexicans"—was found in the year 1790, about six feet below the surface of the Plaza in Mexico, is now walled against the base of one of the towers of the cathedral, and passes by the name of "*el relox de Montezuma*," or "Montezuma's watch."

The *mint* forms part of the great palace buildings; and it is a large establishment. The machinery is old and rough; and one is surprised to consider, that from it so many millions of well-coined dollars issue yearly. But new machinery from England is about to replace the old and in a year or two the establishment will probably equal any other of the same kind, even in Europe.

But one of the most splendid public establishments which I have ever inspected, is certainly the *Casa del Apartado*, where all silver, holding

gold, is sent for separation by chemical process, the one metal from the other; that is, for the extraction of the gold mixed up with the bars of silver, sent to Mexico for the purpose of being coined. This great and truly national establishment is only now in process of completion; and in no part of the world could it be excelled, either materially, mechanically, or scientifically. I believe the Casa del Apartado, when finished, will cost two or three hundred thousand dollars. Its details are most interesting, and it seems to be worked in a perfectly able, judicious, and scientific manner.

El Estanco del Tabaco is another establishment of an extraordinary and highly interesting nature. In Mexico, tobacco is a government monopoly; but so badly did it succeed when in the hands of the government itself, that they wisely farmed out the revenue, and Messrs. Escandon, Mackintôsh and Bringas took the contract for a given number of years, on advantageous terms for the government. No longer sinking revenue in the management of the monopoly, the state at once began to receive monthly payments in hard cash.

The whole business underwent a thorough

reform: order, activity and economy, took the place of wasteful expenditure by irresponsible agents, and unscrupulous jobbers. A guard was appointed; undoubtedly the finest body of men in the republic, and the contraband trade, the bane of every fiscal operation of Spain and her descendants, was altogether crushed in the tobacco revenue.

In this new and better state of affairs, we visited the Estanco del Tabaco, accompanied by the Empresarios above named; and, under the guidance of the chief administrator, we spent some hours in the great establishment.

The building stands on an open piece of ground, not far from the Paseo Nuevo, and scarcely within the precincts of the city. It is only one story high, but runs round large *patios*, and is of a size commensurate with the great manufactory carried on within the walls. About six or seven hundred people are employed in all, in the various processes of segar and snuff-making. Three-fourths or four-fifths of the operatives are women, married and single, middle-aged and young. The most perfect division of labour exists, and the work ascends from the lowest to the highest points by the nicest gradations. There is the receiving and

opening of the rough tobacco—the preparing it, through different operations, for segars; "puros," or leaf segars, of various qualities—for paper segars —for snuff. Then there is the preparation and cutting of the paper into the tiny pieces destined to form one paper segar: then the making into packets, making boxes, packing, marking, sending away; all is done in parts, like the making of a pin. See one box of the paper segars ready to be sent off, and you see a *fac simile* of every one package of this manufacture which leaves the premises.

The female operatives work in suites of long rooms, ranged from one end to the other, with ample space and air, and a forewoman to look over each. The neatness and celerity with which all work is done, is surprising. There order, decency, and propriety preside over the whole establishment; and when you consider that all the females are from the lowest class of such a population as that of Mexico, you are surprised to see such a clean, neat, well-appointed set of factory girls. But there is a great *esprit de corps* in the operatives of the Fabrica de Tabaco, and they stand quite above the rest of the surrounding population as a class

of themselves. Their general morals are many grades higher; and after they have once joined or been admitted into the Fabrica as operatives, there is nothing that the women so much dread as losing caste, or being dismissed for bad conduct. They have all piece-work set them, and the most industrious and expert make excellent wages. They all assemble from seven to eight o'clock in the morning, take their dinner with them, and retire from work at sunset, six or seven.

One fact connected with the *Estanco* must not be omitted. There is a school attached to it for the younger children of the married workwomen; and *nurses* to take care of the infants of the same class, while the mothers are at work. The director, as may be supposed, from his general kindness—his care of his large flock—the firmness, yet amenity with which he keeps up the moral standing, as well as efficient working of the establishment—is not only respected, but what is better—beloved by all. And he accurately reflects the feelings and wishes of his employers.

The distribution of the tobacco and segars over such a wide surface as that of the Republic of

Mexico, is managed by depôts* and sub-depôts throughout the country; and a perfect system of accounts is maintained throughout. One of the principal federal states has *pronounced* against the Tobacco monopoly by the Government—that is Puebla; and a more selfish, or anti-national piece of rebellion cannot be imagined. For it is not a question of monopoly or no monopoly throughout the land; it is simply one state exonerating itself from a tax which all the other states pay towards sustaining the central Government.

* If you could fancy England supplied with malt liquor from one great brewery in London, through the medium of their vintners of the city and country at large, you would have an idea of how the Estanco goes to work. It would be in England, at every public-house, "England's Entire," as it is in Mexico, in every place you visit, "Estanco del Tabaco."

LETTER XLVI.

PUBLIC WORKS—COLEGIO DE LAS BISCAYNAS.

Among the most striking objects in the environs of Mexico, are the two grand aqueducts which supply the city with water. The greater of these, running from the vicinity of Chapultepec, divides the high road into two (with intermediate passages), and has its handsome terminus near to the extremity of the Paseo Nuevo. It is solidly built, although not in good repair; and consists of nine hundred arches. The other goes by the road of San Cosme; one of the most pleasant *paseos* out of the city. The water is soft, and comes from pure and abundant fountains.

The *Desague* of Huehuetoca, or great sewer, formed to relieve Mexico from an overflow of the surrounding lakes, was one of the greatest works of the old Spaniards. The lakes are Chalco and

Xochimilco on the south, their level being more than three feet above that of the great square of Mexico; north-westardly the lake of Tezcuco; and more northerly, in a continuous range, are the lakes of San Christoval and Zumpango. This last is eighteen feet higher than the former, which again, is higher by twelve feet than Tezcuco, and this, three feet above the level of the great square. In 1629, the whole city of Mexico, with the exception of the square, was inundated; and up to 1634, some parts of the town were still traversed by canoes. From the inundation Mexico was relieved by an earthquake; and then the *Desague* was commenced, and finished in 1789. The length of the cut from the sluice of Vertideso to the *Salto*, or rapid of the river Tula, was 67,537 feet; made at a cost of eight millions of dollars. What would our Commissioners of Sewers say to a work of this kind?

Since the formation and conclusion of the *Desague*, all fears of inundation have ceased. In some of the still so called lakes, there is no doubt water; but where it exists, it rises little above a mud-puddle, except during the heavy, rainy season, and at all times it is quite superficial.

They are certainly the poorest *lakes*, properly speaking, I ever saw. On the other hand, from the drainage and cutting down of trees in many places, what was once water and verdure, is now an arid and salinitrous surface, as I have mentioned, on our entry into the city of Mexico. Nothing can be more dreary-looking, nothing so unlike a deluge. Even the famous Tezcuco, dried up during the heat of summer, sends forth so far and wide a fetid, sickening smell, that it often of a night reached us in the Capital, although distant many miles from the marsh.

The establishments in Mexico in connexion with public crime, indigence, mental and physical suffering, and general amelioration of the poorer classes are various. I shall first speak of the *Acordada,* or public prison.

The Spanish race has perhaps made less progress in the treatment of public crime, than any other nation. The terrible state of their prisons and dungeons is notorious; no means of moral correction has in them ever been attempted; the person only of the criminal is watched and guarded; and he is too often treated as a mere ferocious animal, rather than as a human being of

stamp Divine. I fear Mexico offers no exception to the general statement.

The *Acordada* is a very large building, situated at the extremity of a square beyond the Alameda, and on the way to the Paseo Nuevo. Here also is the *Morgue*, or dead house, a view of which, and of the bodies taken there day by day, is open to the public, through a low barred window in front of the prison. There are constantly grim instances of violent deaths, and here those who are missed from home or haunt are looked for.

As usual, the building runs round a quadrangular court; and here, well watched and guarded, the great body of the criminals are gathered together during the day*, except when

* "The whole of this area," says Mr. Branz Mayer, "is filled with human beings; the great congress of Mexican crime, mixed and mingling like a hill of busy ants, swarming from their sandy caverns. Some are stripped and bathing (in a fountain of troubled water in the centre)—some are fighting in a corner—some making baskets in another. In one place, a crowd is gathered around a witty story-teller relating the adventures of his rascally life. In another, a group is engaged in weaving with a hand-loom. Robbers, murderers, thieves, ravishers, felons of every description, and vagabonds of every aspect, are crammed within this court yard; and almost free from discipline or moral restraint, form perhaps the most splendid school of misdemeanour and villany on the American continent."

in gangs, they are driven by pairs chained together, into the streets, there to work as scavengers, and where nothing can be more disgusting than their appearance while, half naked and dirty, they are raking about in the ditches and open sewers of the suburbs of the town.

Apart from these criminals here spoken of, are a somewhat better class of prisoners, kept within the corridor; but on the whole, there is scarcely any distinction between the slightest and the greatest offenders against the laws; and one thing is certain, that *contamination* of the comparatively innocent, by juxta-position and intercourse with the very worst, is *inevitable*. The *Capilla*, in which condemned criminals pass the last three days of their life, is in a corner of the quadrangle, "and at a certain hour, it is usual for all the prisoners to gather together in front of the door, and chant a hymn for the victim of the laws. It is a solemn service of crime for crime."

The female prisoners and evil-doers occupy a separate part of the prison, and they are divided roughly into those who have occupied a comparatively reputable place in society, and those of the lowest grade. Of course the latter form the

great bulk of the prisoners. Both classes are superintended, more or less, by a society of ladies, who endeavour to instruct and do their best to reclaim these wretched criminals and minor offenders against the laws. Those who have been tried and sentenced are principally condemned to labour in the prison (not very hard), and this is carried out in a large vaulted gallery under their prison rooms. A less guilty set are, in a large hall, employed in menial offices; and in an adjoining court, on which the room opened, the still innocent children of some of the prisoners are to be seen disporting in the open air.

Although the prison, I believe, is under the jurisdiction of municipal directors, it is guarded within and without by a military force. The commanding officers and subalterns have a large and lofty apartment, for themselves, in the front or principal part of the prison, and in the guard-room, all the business connected with their charge is carried on—"Amid the hum of the crowd, the clank of chains, the shouts of prisoners, and the eternal din of an ill-regulated establishment."

Mr. Mayer gives the following criminal statistics for the year 1842 :—

During the first six months, there were imprisoned in the City of	Males.	Females.	Total.
Mexico	3197	1427	4624
During the second six months .	2858	1379	4237
Total	6055	2806	8861

It was not possible for Mr. Mayer to gather from the returns, the number of finally *convicted* prisoners, but he shews the chief crimes for which the prisoners were incarcerated.

1. For adultery, and prostitution in its worst forms	312	179	491
2. Robbery	1500	470	1970
3. Quarrelling and wounding .	2129	1104	3233
4. Quarrelling, bearing arms, etc.	612	444	1056
5. Homicide (murder) attempt at murder, and murder and robbery	70	17	87
6. Other crimes	75	22	97
Total	4698	2236	6934

During the same year 113 dead bodies were found—17 individuals were executed, and 894 sent to the hospital. This was in 1842; and it would

seem to argue a diminution of the higher crimes, that in this year (1849) I cannot call to mind one execution as having taken place; certainly not one of any public importance, as involving a more than ordinary atrocity.

In 1842, the cost of the Acordada, was £4121 in salaries of officers, and £30,232 for the support of the prisoners; together, at the rate of about £7000 per annum.

From the *Acordada*, it is pleasant to pass to the *Cuna*, from guilt to innocence, from every thing which most revolts, to all which most interests humanity. The *Cuna*—literally cradle—is the Foundling Hospital. No one who has visited our own in London, and looked carefully over its details, can have left it without profound impressions of the moral good which it accomplishes—of the incipient misery which it cuts short for thousands, substituting in its stead, health, happiness, and contentment, to those who are the objects of so pure and so heart-stirring a bounty.

The *Cuna* of Mexico, differs, in some particulars, from our Foundling Hospital in London. In the former the babes are not only put out to nurse, under the system of the nurse herself giving

security for good behaviour, but many infants are nursed in the establishment itself. They are divided from the children who have been weaned. All is cleanly and comfortable; and a junta of *ladies* of the first families take the utmost pains to see that the children are well cared for. Then the kindly and truly maternal nature of the higher orders of the female sex in Mexico, leads to a very wide system of *adoption*; and in such case the children are brought up as belonging to the family, with invariable care and affection. The acting directresses of the establishment are females of unimpeachable respectability; and thus the whole charity is carried out in an efficient, kindly, and Christian-like spirit. All honour to such an institution! and all praise to the high-minded individuals, male and female, who make the prosperity of this charity their daily care, as I am sure it must be their internal and most justifiable pride!

The great hospital for the insane, is that of San Hipolito—a large airy and most excellently conducted public establishment. The treatment of the patients is excellent, and indeed treads pretty closely on that adopted at the Hanwell

Asylum. It is true they have in San Hipolito dark rooms for the refractory, a *Quarto Negro*, or black hole for the furious, and strait waistcoats; but the general system pursued is that of mild and gentle treatment; and it has its reward. The great majority of the patients are quiet and well conducted—dine together in harmony; enjoy the fine gronds, and have a great respect for the director.

The Hospital *de Jesus de los Naturales*, is a large and handsome building, and is extremely well managed. It is for both sexes. It has every convenience for the patients, including hot and cold baths. Attached to it is a chapel, and on the *azotea* is a dissecting room. In the old church of San Hipolito, was deposited, by his own express desire, the body of Cortez, who founded and endowed the establishment; but his remains were removed during the revolutionary troubles, to avoid worse treatment.

There is also the Hospital *de San Juan de Dios*, and another, originally erected for lepers, called *San Lazaro:* and there may be others which did not come under my notice.

An admirably managed institution in Mexico,

is the *Monte Pio*, the same sort of thing which exists in France, under the name of *Mont de Piété*, a national establishment for advancing money on pledges, at a low rate of interest. The government undertakes to be pawnbroker.

The *Monte Pio* of Mexico is now established in that which was once the palace of Cortez, forming a corner of the great square. The amount of property pledged here by high and low is prodigious, and ranges over every article, from brilliants down to common wearing apparel. The interest charged is very moderate. The pledges, after a given time, if not redeemed, are offered for private sale, at the lowest price acceptable to the pledger: if no sale can thus be effected, then the pledges are, after a time, put up to public sale, sold to the highest bidder, and, after deduction of interest and charge of sale, the surplus is paid to the owner. All this is done with the most scrupulous justice towards the unfortunate pledger; and such a relief is a great boon, as I say, both to high and low.

Very many years ago, there were, in fine weather, to be seen almost daily in Mexico, three old gentlemen taking their evening walk together.

They were great and intimate friends, inseparable companions, congenial in their nature, feelings, and pursuits. They had been merchants, and after amassing a handsome fortune each, they had retired from the turmoils of active life and pursuits, to enjoy the *otium cum dignitate.* They were all three rich men; but, unlike rich men generally, they had not allowed wealth to warp or destroy the original kindly and benevolent bent of their feelings.

These three old gentlemen were natives of Spain, born in Biscay, and although they had finally cast their lot in Mexico, their love of Fatherland had never been dulled, but continued through their lives to burn with a pure and bright flame.

In one of their evening strolls, they passed through an outskirt of the city, a quarter where many poor Biscayans were located. Their attention was called to the children, healthy and chubby enough, but playing about in the dirty streets, dirty themselves, and neglected. They interrogated many of them, and found they were in a state of great mental destitution.

They proceeded gravely on their walk, when,

after a short time, one of them paused, and thus addressed his two companions,—

"My friends, is it not a sad thing that which we have just witnessed—the children of our own people in the state of unenlightened heathens? Let us educate them."

"*Bien*," said the one, and "*bien*" (*good*), said the other in laconical assent.

"I will put down," said the leader of the three, "a hundred thousand dollars" (£20,000).

"I will do the same," said the second.

"And I will do the same," said the third.

This was all the fuss that was made by these worthy Biscaynos, on proposing to commence their philanthropic and noble undertaking, with a capital of sixty thousand pounds!

They went home, and set immediately but quietly about bringing their first idea into a tangible shape. They had more particularly noticed the little *female* children, and conceived, rightly enough, that if they could make good mothers of them, they would lay the best foundation for an improved race.

They bought a large and splendid site, in a healthy and pleasant outskirt of the city, for the

building which they determined to erect; and they proceeded on a scale which was suited to their own large ideas, rather than to the amount of their "first" subscription: and the result was, that they produced, what I believe I am correct in asserting, the noblest asylum which was ever raised in any part of the globe by individual munificence—*El Colegio de las Biscaynas.*

By the kindness of Mr. Mackintosh, we saw the Colegio to the best advantage. He made up a party of our own immediate friends; and the Administrator, a gentleman most highly and deservedly respected in Mexico, received us, and kindly offered his services in shewing us the establishment. Without him, we should only have half comprehended what we went to see.

The building, we found, was after the universal custom, a great square, and modelled, as I understood, after the Regal Palace of Madrid. Built with the highest degree of solidity, which characterises all the Spanish architecture of note, the details of the college were plain, which, on so magnificent a scale, seemed to enhance the grandeur of this noble work. The *patios*, the *corridores*, or galleries, the lofty public rooms, the stair-cases,

and the fountains were strikingly impressive. The whole plan on which the charity was conducted, on the other hand, appeared to me to be absolute perfection.

When the three Founders had arrived at the point of opening the college, they stipulated that, towards admission to it, a preference should at all times, and in every case, be given to the children and descendants of Biscayans. But it was ere long found, that the college was not only sufficient for all such parties thus entitled to it, but for many more. It can commodiously provide for about 500 children, although that number I believe is never reached, besides giving work, as I shall have occasion to remark, to many who are no longer on the foundation.

Let us examine the details of management. The whole establishment is under the charge of the Administrator, who, however, does not reside in the college; but the exact knowledge he possesses of every one, and of every thing done in it, is wonderful. Then comes the *Rectora*, the lady, who, under the Administrator, carries out his orders and plans, and superintends the

whole establishment, having a nice set of rooms for herself. The next arrangement, which struck me as at once novel and admirable, is the division of the children into what may be called families. As thus:—A matron of the very best character has charge of eight or ten of the children; and she has a little *ménage* of her own, entirely independent of the rest of the college. She has every thing within herself — kitchen, parlour, small offices, bed-rooms; and she herself lays in her own marketing and general provision. She receives the money from the *Rectora,* and gives in an exact account of her expenditure at the end of the week. She is the mother of her family. Multiply this by forty or fifty, and you have the domestic establishment of the college. Neatness, cleanliness, order and economy presided over every one of these family quarters; and of course, the matron and her "children" do the whole of the household duties.

Divided into classes, and mustered in splendid school rooms, the work of education goes forward during the day; and a number of female teachers fully adequate to their work, impart the knowledge considered necessary to their pupils — reading,

writing, arithmetic, and from plain sewing up to the most elaborate and beautiful embroidery I ever saw. Indeed, many of the pupils of the college are unrivalled in this department.

The children, when they have finished their education, and arrived at an age when they can earn their own livelihood, are placed out with the greatest care; while the *colegio* provides employment for those who choose to continue to work there with the needle—or those who for this purpose, and preserving an unimpeached character, choose to return to it: all are received and employed. The working rooms are like all the rest, large, commodious and airy; and there we saw many of the young women who had been brought up at the college, busily employed at their avocations, as embroiderers. The work which they put through their hands, whether in plain embroidery of cambric, or in the gorgeous vestments and hangings of the church, in gold and silk —in tissue and brocade—are of unsurpassable taste and beauty.

The children are healthful and happy; in both which respects, the space and air they enjoy—the interminable corridors—the great *patio*—the foun-

tains, the gardens, and the *azotea* (the level roof)—tend greatly to promote such health, and such happiness.

To those who have inspected the Foundling Hospital in London, I can at once convey an idea of the cleanliness, order, decorum and method of the *Colegio de las Biscaynas;* the one competes with the other, and both are unimpeachable.

The room in which the church vestments are kept, serves as a confessional for the pupils. But *the priests are in another room,* with gratings in the wall, for the purposes of confession.

Forming part of the establishment of the *Colegio,* is a large and handsome chapel, richly adorned and gilded. Though belonging to the great building, the body of the chapel, is entered by a door from the street, open to all Catholics; but the inmates of the establishment itself hear mass from a gallery above, to which they ascend from the college, where a grating in front obstructs the gaze of the multitude below. This gallery is extremely curious in its shrines, saints, and relics. The organ stands in it, and many of the young people join the sacred music with their voices.

In another part of the gigantic edifice, is to be

found a very different place from the chapel. It is a great oblong hall, fitted up as a theatre, for the amusement of the scholars! At one end is the stage and proscenium, and seats and accommodation for the audience fill up the rest of the large hall. I need scarcely say that the theatricals are of a primitive kind — something, I fancy, like our old "Mysteries;" and that both actresses and audience, consist of those who live in the college, or are attached to it as having been pupils in earlier life.

After traversing a very long aisle, or corridor, running towards the back of the college, having a deserted look, not in keeping with the other parts, we stopped at a low door, through which, on being opened, we entered, and found ourselves in the open air. We were in the cemetery of the *Colegio de las Biscaynas;* a touching *memento mori,* and suggestive, somehow, of the whole history of the charity and its founders. They could do all for the happy little inmates of the college, while they lived: but no care—not the best—will keep out the visits of death. So here was the habitation of death. Some very plain inscriptions, inserted in the walls, marked where lay *Rectoras,* who after

fulfilling well their responsible duties, had gone the way of all living. And round about were the graves of the departed pupils. I may say, the most sedulous attention is paid to the health of the living: an excellent laboratory is fitted up in the college, and the first medical assistance is always at hand.

The *azoteas* are admirably adapted for morning and evening exercise; and the gardens, the corridors, and the great *patios*, with their fountains, render the resources for *health* most complete.

We finished our long tour and examination at the Board-room, where the trustees meet occasionally and transact their business. It is a neat, plain, business-like room; and its great attraction and ornament, are the full length portraits of the three Biscaynos, who built and founded the college in which we stood. I will not say much for the artistic merit of the paintings; but it was sufficient to make me look with reverence on the effigies of the three worthies; and I felt, after once seeing them, that I should not like to have them replaced by any higher works of art.

Before concluding, I have one very remark-

able fact to lay before you; it is, that without doubt, the trustees of the college of las Biscaynas, established long before we ever thought of it—the system of *ragged schools*. Ten years ago, writers on Mexico had not even the name to give; but they bear testimony to the fact. In one part of the college—with a quite separate, side entrance, there are two very large school rooms, fitted up as such, and in the strictest sense, ragged schools. All the children who choose to enter—or all who are taken there day by day—are gratuitously educated. The poorest and most wretched may go, without enquiry into what or who they are. It is of course a day school; and excellent teachers are provided. They are divided into classes; and writing, reading, and arithmetic are taught to all, and sewing and embroidery to the girls. We found the children better clad than could have been expected; and the order and decorum established, shewed what *may* be done with the poorest and the lowest, if we will only condescend to consider them as God's creatures, and to treat them as such.

I have gone largely into my details of the

Colegio de las Biscaynas, for three reasons:— first, that, as superior to any thing of the same kind established by individual munificence I had ever seen, it made a powerful impression on my mind. Secondly, that *as a perfect model,* I thought it my duty to hold it up, as far as my feeble powers go, to the admiration and imitation of the good and the wealthy of England; and lastly, to impress upon you, my readers, that where such an institution as this exists now, in all its pristine vigour and healthfulness, there must be germs, even if they lie latent, of general good.

The Administrator told me, that during the whole of the troubles which had fallen upon Mexico during her revolution; during the disorders of contending parties, and the excesses of internal war; during bloodshed and riot, and invasion of foreign foes, the *Colegio de las Biscaynas* had followed up the even tenor of its way: no one had dared to interfere with the hallowed sanctuary for young and defenceless females.

The funds possessed by the college have always been ample for all the purposes of its foundation: and such is the exact economy, unstained by the slightest parsimony (for peace and plenty are

evident everywhere), exercised in the management of this great establishment, that you will be surprised to hear, as I was, that the whole annual expenditure of this princely institution does not exceed twenty-five thousand dollars — something less than five thousand pounds per annum.

LETTER XLVII.

THE PASEOS AND ENVIRONS OF MEXICO.

I HAVE insensibly gone on occupying so much space with my foregoing letters, that I must greatly curtail what I had yet to say on a variety of topics—omit many altogether—and take you very rapidly indeed through the United States; which I regret.

Leaving the heart of the city, its public buildings and institutions, I shall in this letter take a somewhat wider range.

As stated in our letters, there are three public drives and promenades—*paseos*, as they are shortly and appropriately called in Spanish — the Viga, the Paseo Nuevo, and the Alameda.

Las Vigas is the *paseo* of the city of Mexico at large; the Paseo Nuevo is the drive and the ride

of the aristocracy: and the Alameda was once fashionable, but is so no longer.

A peculiarity affecting Las Vigas is, that the promenades only commence with Lent, and continue daily through that season (as it ought to be at least) of religious preparation. From Easter they are held on a few holidays and Sundays: then comes the *combate* or conclusion, and the meetings are forgotten till Lent comes round once more.

The Paseo de la Viga* is the most completely national gathering I have ever witnessed; and I defy any country to shew a more characteristic or more amusing show of the manners, customs, and æsthetics of its people, than the Viga shews of those of the Mexicans.

The paseo lies on the south-east side of the *plaza* of Mexico, and before getting to it, you pass through large and desolate-looking places, very partially built upon. The ruinous bull-ring lies on one side; and clearing the whole at the boundary line, you enter on the *paseo*. On your left hand is the canal, with double rows of trees on its banks, and

* *Viga* means the beam of a house, or large log, but why the *paseo* is called "*de la Viga*," I do not know.

plenty of space; in the centre is a wide line of road for carriages and equestrians; and on the right hand are again two rows of trees to form the double avenue.

As you approach, you find yourself in a stream of human beings, all moving to the *paseo*—on foot, on horseback, and in carriages, mixed up in one heterogeneous mass—*leperos*—*Indios*—secondary and inferior classes of Mexican men and women, vendors of fruits, sweetmeats, and other things, are the pedestrians; and as they arrive at the paseo, they disperse among the trees, or keep to the foot-way, or loiter on the banks of the canal. Scarcely any respectable-looking or well-dressed person, however, is to be seen in the motley groups. But on horseback, what an extraordinary variety of classes! Mexicans of every grade—from the Europe-travelled scions of the highest houses, and the *cavalleros* proper, boasting of their Spanish lineage and unadulterated native grace and greatness, down to the very lowest who can contrive to sport a nag, however ill-fitted both man and beast may be for such a *concurso*: and the splendid looking-intermediate classes The *rancheros*—the gay citizens—the fancy men of

every kind—many of them mounted on fiery steeds, and decked out in splendid Mexican costume—the horses covered with rich trappings, here in silver, there in fine stamped leather—what a mixture! Then foreigners of every nation—particularly the French, English and German—our own countrymen, generally, keeping to their own equestrian proprieties, and, as I believe, superiority. The whole equestrian turn-out forms a rare sight.

But no less heterogeneous is the concourse of carriages and vehicles of every kind. You have them from the value of five or six hundred guineas, down to twenty pounds. The equipages of the first families are really fine, well appointed, and with splendid *frisones*—the large American coach-horses. Some of them cost two thousand dollars (£400) a pair.

Then come others, somewhat less dashing, with fine mules; and from this point down they go by degrees, till you get to such a family carriage as I have described at page 63 of this volume.

The concourse is immense. The carriages go up and down the principal drive, of about a

mile and a quarter in length, forming complete and compact moving lines; and at two or three different points they draw up, in standing lines, to observe, in silence, the passing to and fro of the moving panorama. The horsemen draw up, ever and anon, in the same way; while in the wide and commodious centre, are parties—some moving in slow masses; others trotting along, in familiar chit-chat; and here and there, more lively spirits galloping, three or four abreast, in gallant style. Throughout, order is maintained, when necessary (although that is seldom) by a detachment of cavalry, stationed at different parts of the *paseo*.

While all this is going on by land, the canal running parallel with the Viga is nearly covered with canoes, filled with Indians, who ascend and descend, partly on pleasure, partly on business. The canal springs from the lake of Chalco, passing by the Chinampas; once floating islands, now low lying garden grounds, separated by deep and wide ditches (little canals, in fact); and then goes on (I speak of the canal) to form a junction with the lake of Tezcuco.

The canoe-passengers enjoy themselves quite as

much as their Viga rivals, if not more. The women's heads are profusely adorned with garlands, principally of double red poppies; and both sexes mix in their slow, listless dance, on the ample boards of their flat-bottomed vessels, aided and assisted by the old thrumming guitar. How much this adjunct to the *paseo de las Vigas* tends to add to its picturesque and varied aspect, you may easily imagine: it renders the amusement unique in its kind.

About sunset, when this great medley of human beings is at its height,—equipages, horsemen, and pedestrians begin to bend their various ways towards the city; and the *melée* of the departure is even more truly republican in its character than it is in the gathering of these heterogeneous masses as already described.

I have much less to say of the Paseo Nuevo than of the Viga. It is the stately promenade of the fashionables of Mexico, and has already been mentioned as the Paseo de Bucarelli. As a promenade, its principal if not only attraction is the view from it of the mountains of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl—otherwise it is a long wide avenue (something more than half a mile)

with trees on either side. It leads out to the terminus of the great aqueduct, and to Chapultepec.

To this Paseo, then, all the fashionables of Mexico resort, in carriages and on horseback, and spend one or two hours in promenading up and down, and in occasionally taking up a stand at a side or opening, there to look at those who continue to move. A few gentlemen pedestrians are to be seen here and there, solitary sort of wanderers; and this, I believe, is all that is to be said of the Paseo Nuevo.

In going to it from the city, the carriages (and generally the gentlemen *à cheval*) pass through the Alameda; and this passage seems now to be the principal purpose for which the old-fashioned place—a mixture of gardens, walks, and drives—is kept up. In "the morning early," a few, but very few, fashionable people, *walk* in the Alameda, (the only time that such an abomination as walking is permitted to Mexican ladies). Later in the day, seedy-looking citizens, or lazy *leperos*, are to be seen seated under the trees, on the outer part of the gardens—and in the afternoon the place assumes a lively appearance, from the throng of

carriages and horsemen hastening through it to and from the Paseo Nuevo.

As this may seem rather a disparaging account of the once fashionable Alameda of Mexico, I must, in justice to it, quote what an old Irish monk, Thomas Gage by name, who found his way to Mexico, nearly two hundred and fifty years ago, says of the promenade.

"The gallants of this city shew themselves daily; some on horseback, and most in coaches, about four of the clock in the afternoon, in a pleasant shady field called the Alamaida, full of trees and walks, somewhat like unto our Moorfields; where do meet, as constantly as the merchants upon our Exchange, about two thousand coaches full of gallants, ladies, and citizens, to see and to be seen—to court and to be courted—the gentlemen having in their train blackamoor slaves, some a dozen, some half a dozen, waiting on them, in brave and gallant liveries, heavy with gold and silver lace, with silk stockings on their black legs, and roses (roséttes) on their feet, and swords by their sides. The ladies also carry their train of slaves by their coaches' side, of such jet-like dame-

sells, as have before been mentioned for their light apparell; who, with their bravery, and white mantell over them, seem to be, as the Spaniard saith, '*Mosca en leche,*' a flie in milk." * Since these grand old times of trains of slaves, with silk stockings on their black legs, what a falling off to be sure!

* Gage went from Ireland to Spain, and then entered a convent of Dominican monks. He was sent to the Phillipines in 1625, made money, got back to England, abjured the Catholic faith, and obtained the living of Deal in Kent.

LETTER XLVIII.

CHAPULTEPEC—TISAPAN—MAGDALENA.

The plain of Mexico, as often stated, is, for a great part of the year brown and arid, exposed, uninterruptedly, to the burning rays of a tropical sun. But almost all the rising ground on the opposite side of the city is full of interest and beauty, both from the diversity of fine scenery, its general cultivation, and the good account to which, in many ways and in many places, the natural riches and advantages of the country have been turned.

Several of these places have been particularly mentioned in our preceding pages. Tacubaya, San Augustin de la Cuevas, Guadalupe, the Haciendas de San Mateo and la Lecheria, Cuajamalpa, and the Desert. Some have been touched on incidentally, but one or two which we visited, have scarcely been spoken of at all.

The most remarkable of all the objects around and near Mexico, is Chapultepec. It is only about two miles from the City: it is visited by all comers—it is described by all in the same way; and I can add nothing new to this somewhat hackneyed part of Mexican travel. Chapultepec is a viceregal palace, of immense dimensions, placed on a splendid eminence, where once stood the favourite retreat of Montezuma. The present edifice (never entirely finished) was built by the young Viceroy Galvez, at an expense of three hundred thousand dollars; but the court of Madrid, jealous of the power which a viceroy might exercise, with so dominant a position over the capital, gave it to be understood that the occupation of the new palace would be "a custom more honoured in the breach than the observance." *Now* the building is called a military school; and, as far as we could see, the occupation of it was *still* "a custom more honoured," etc. It had an untenanted and ruinous appearance.

But the gardens and grounds about Chapultepec are well worthy of all the eulogiums bestowed upon them. They do indeed form solemn groves worthy of the memory of Montezuma.

They consist principally of cypresses of an extraordinary size, with a grey and hoary lichen depending a long way down from their branches, which give them the air of giants of ancient and bygone times, beyond the reach of modern description. "The magnificent grove of cypress," says Ruxton, "outlives all the puny structures of man, and, still in the prime of strength and beauty, looks with contempt on the ruined structures of generation after generation which have passed away."

The "cypress of Montezuma," fifty-one feet in circumference, is a tree of the most noble proportions. It meets your eye soon after you enter the grove, and stands alone; but as it looks like three united in one—I agree with Mr. Ward in thinking that the second grand tree, springing from one trunk, is the more striking of the two. As you walk through the long lines of these wonderful productions of nature—where they have stood for half a dozen centuries at least—probably for many more—you are inclined to apostrophise them, in the words of Lady Douglas—"Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom accords with my soul's sadness"—and you feel for the time being, shut out from all the vanities and frivolities of life.

Let me shortly conclude, in Mr. Ruxton's words, by saying—that "from the summit of the hill to which a path winds through a labyrinth of shrubs, a fine [indeed it is perhaps the finest] view of the valley and City of Mexico is obtained, and of the surrounding mountains and volcanic peaks."

One of the prettiest outlets from Mexico is by the *garita,* or gate, *de la Piedad.* A beautiful ride from the garita, through an avenue of trees, about a mile and a-half in length, leads to the *Capilla de la Piedad,* a picturesque church, and thence you get into the open country. Passing through a small village, called Miscuaque (pronounced Miss Quacky) situated in the midst of small *haciendas,* you come to the handsome village of San Angel, a place of some importance, as resorted to by many fashionable families, "during the season," for health and recreation. Madame C— de la B— resided here for some time, and gives very interesting particulars about it, and its adjoining village Coyohuacan, particularly during Passion Week. San Angel is celebrated, also, for its convent,—a comfortable one, with a large garden surrounded by a high wall.

All sorts of good things, it is said, are to be had in it; and the *padres* are particularly famous for the pears which their garden produces.

We passed through, and made ourselves partially acquainted with San Angel, on two or three occasions, on our way to visit our friend, Mr. L—, at his country house and cotton factory, at Tisapan—a league and half further on. We had, in company with other friends, two or three Mexican breakfasts at Mr. L—'s establishment; and they were quite perfect in their kind.*

Mr. L—'s factory, in its machinery and management, might well vie with many of those in his native land. The machinery is worked by water power, and Mr. L— produces, in much perfection, every kind of *manta*, or unbleached cotton. Whether these factories, of which there are now many, will stand the new impulse of free-trade,—for at present they are highly protected,—is a question which I will not here discuss. It is enough to say that the business is well done, if not cheaply done; and that one could not see, without great regret, the present industrial system in cotton manufactures upset in Mexico.

* See page 149.

Mr. L—'s house, garden, and factory stand in highly-picturesque grounds. The small, but rapid river which affords him his water-power, and which very seldom fails him, turns a wheel of great dimensions. His people earn good wages; and the united kindness and firmness of his character ensures him good and contented operatives. It is something to see a British subject thus established in Mexico, beyond the jurisdiction or protection of the capital. Of course, Mr. L— has had, as a foreigner, his troubles in gaining his dominant position; but now all seems to work smoothly.

The country round about is very picturesque. Mr. L—'s house stands on the verge of the *Pedregal* of which I have spoken; and a fine view of the mountain of Ajusco and the wild country around, is obtained from his *azotea*. Hence Mr. L— pointed out to me the very difficult line of march through this mountainous and rugged country, which the American invading force had chosen as their approach on the capital. Mr. L— himself witnessed all the operations of both parties at this interesting point of the attack.

On the 5th of July, Mr. Mackintosh most kindly made up a party for us to Magdalena and

the Cañada—places of which I find no mention made in any of the Mexican travels which I have read.

The village of Magdalena lies three or four leagues beyond Tisapan; and as the road is of and belonging to the *Pedregal*, the way thence is here and there rugged. We set off, a pleasant party. In a commodious omnibus, drawn by four powerful *frisones*, were Mr. W—, of the United States' Legation, the M. de Raddepont, and myself; on horseback, H—, Mr. Mackintosh, and Messrs. F— and B—.

After passing a *paper-mill* on a large scale, in the course of erection, and in which Mr. M— has an interest, we got to the Magdalena, about eleven A.M.; and here we found the proprietor of the factories — to see which was the main object of our visit — who had come over from his country-house, near San Agustin de las Cuevas, to have his great industrial establishment properly shown to us. It is one of the largest in Mexico, and comprehends not only a first-rate cotton-factory, but manufactures of a very great variety of woollen stuffs.

We were received with all the hospitable kindness and urbanity of manner of which we have seen and experienced so much in Mexico. A truly magnificent *dejeuner à la fourchette* was laid out for us in the great dining-hall, at which we were joined by some friends of the proprietor, while he himself, without participating, moved about in agreeable conversation with every one alternately, only seeing that we all did justice, after our long ride and drive, to the ample board spread before us.

We proceeded to inspect the cotton-factory, which we found in perfect working-order; having all the latest improvements introduced. It employs five or six hundred hands, among whom the greatest order and discipline have been introduced. To give you an idea of what *sort* of people the owner could reclaim and discipline, I must tell you that, desiring us to leave H— behind, he showed us into one room where the roughest preliminary work was going on, and where sat about sixty men, shirtless and bare from the waist upwards. They looked like, and were of, the class *lepero*. "Now," said my informant, "there is not one of these men who

has not a *tajo*, a cut of some kind, in his face or body. They have lived desperate lives: while they remain here, they are perfectly well-conducted operatives." The water-wheel of the Magdalena *fabrica* is the largest in Mexico. To look on the mighty monster turning round, was something wonderful. We went into the vast abyss which contained its body—a splendid work, to which we approached by a fine, wide, inclined plane, solid and paved. Round the wheel ran a platform; and like so many pigmies—little Gullivers before the Brogdignagian queen—we walked round, and admired the vast proportions of this noble specimen of machinery.

The woollen manufactory interested me still more than the cotton, from the great variety of successful experiments which were in process. The dyeing of the wools was excellently done; and some admirable specimens of fine cloths and other woollen fabrics were exhibited to us. Then a neat shop in the village was well furnished with both the woollen and cotton stuffs in all their variety, for the supply of the *paysanos*, the country-people, far and near.

It was a pretty sight—that of all the factory-girls

dispersing through the village when the dinner-bell rang; and of returning from their modest homes to resume their work. Such a sight is, of course, much more striking to an English traveller in a picturesque Mexican village, than in the streets of a manufacturing town of his own country.

The superabundant water-power of the Magdalena is obtained from what is called La Cañada, a far-famed place; which, after concluding with La Magdalena, we proceeded to view.

A short walk brought us to the place, a private property, going by the indefinite name of *El Rancho*, "the Cottage;" for there is only a farmsteading on the grounds; but I have seen many fine houses without grounds; although I never yet saw such fine grounds as those of the Cañada without a house. They were formed in a deep ravine; and so far as this was turned into garden and pleasure-walks and grounds, a series of terraces, with a separate walk along each, led you from the *rancho* to the top of the acclivity. Here the scene was very beautiful; and, stretching beyond the cultivated part, the walk went through woods and groves, alternating with openings apparently

made by nature to show her other surrounding works.

At the end of this walk, in all perhaps of a mile and a half, we turned to the left, and were gradually led to the banks of the river, the course of which we had now to follow, as it impetuously forced its way to the great wheel of the Magdalena. It was the very perfection of mountain river scenery; even finer, I think, than that of the "desert," which I have already described.

We returned to the *fabrica;* were again regaled with the best of creature-comforts (particularly with a variety of choice old Spanish and other wines, in which our host was curious, and a connoisseur); and, towards evening, we bade adieu to our kind host, to whom we had been indebted for a day so profitably and so pleasantly spent.

One of the well-known rides from Mexico, is to the village of Los Remedios, about four leagues off, celebrated at once for the splendid view obtained from it, and for the effigy of the Virgin, second only in renown to that of Guadalupe. I can only afford to give a condensed account of it.

The road to Los Remedios leads through the village of Tacuba, which I have not yet

mentioned. It is in a somewhat ruinous state, but remarkable for a very noble church, erected by Cortez, and for a Montezuman cypress, of imposing height. Hence the road to Los Remedios ascends by rugged hills and a difficult way.

La Virgen de los Remedios, was the Spanish Patroness;* her image, brought over by Cortez, having replaced the Indian idols in the great temple of Mexico, after due purification. It is said to have been concealed on the famous and historical "*noche triste,*" or sad night, when the Spaniards retreated from Mexico, through Tacuba, to the adjacent heights. It was afterwards found (according to the legend) on a barren mountain, in the heart of a *maguey*, by an Indian. It then received the name "La Virgen de los Remedios," and was reputed to cure many maladies; being more especially famous for putting an end to long droughts. A temple was built on the spot where the image of the virgin was found: the belief in her miraculous powers spread far and wide: gifts of immense value poured in upon her sanctuary:

* Called *La Gachupina*, by the Mexicans; the old Spaniards being designated generally by what is meant as the contemptuous name of *Gachupin*.

and her jewels, and diamonds, and dresses, amounted at last to an almost fabulous value. The image itself, of a foot in length, is a poor and mutilated one; but its value is so great, that it is now generally preserved in the cathedral, and only brought out on great occasions, particularly and especially when a procession to mitigate the evils of a drought takes place; and on some occasions, it is said, the image is let out for processions at a very high price. Removed to the cathedral, the Virgen de los Remedios fulfils her mission in her own temple vicariously; her representative being more brilliant to the eye, but much less costly in its appointments. Her festival is celebrated annually by vast numbers of votaries, almost exclusively leperos and Indians. Thousands attend it; and the scene, as you may imagine, is one of the most original and curious that can be pictured by the mind.

The grand view of the surrounding country is obtained from the top of the steeple; and it embraces, better than from almost any other point, all the striking points and prominent beauties of the panorama, and particularly of the valley of Mexico, which stretches out below.

Near the village, are to be seen the ruins of a noble aqueduct of fifty arches, built by the Spaniards.

Two other shorter excursions than the Remedios are among the pleasant rides from Mexico. One, the *Olivas*, or plantation of Olives, an "hacienda," now deserted, but the grounds of which were beautiful in their day. The other, *Los Morales*, "mulberries," is very prettily situated, and the gardens and grounds are in nice order.

LETTER XLIX.

De Omnibus Rebus.

Mexico, 30*th September*, 1849.

There is much which is amusing in the streets and out-door population of Mexico. The total absence, however, of well-dressed women, is a great draw-back to the fashionable streets, such as the *Calle de los Plateros* (the Bond Street of Mexico); and while lounging in them, all you are permitted to see of the "*Señoras de tono*," is their shopping. They come in their carriages, stop at the shop doors, proceed from one to another, and in this way carry forward the momentous business of a lady's life. The early morning walk to the *Alameda* is their only indulgence in peripatetics.

The great plaza is the most curious part of the city; the most bustling (except in the vicinity of

the markets); and the most picturesque and various in the shops and in the shoppers. All classes are here mixed up,—minus the "*Señoras de tono*" aforesaid—from the poor Indian upwards. During the day, a constant stream of people move round the plaza, and give great animation to it. The whole side of the square fronting the Palace, and half of the next, forms an arcade, filled with shops and other establishments of the most diversified and heterogeneous kind; toy shops, book stalls, cafés, silversmiths, with curious specimens of Mexican wares, silver-work of every kind, clothes and Mexican costume shops, everything Mexican, and all ostentatiously displayed with great abundance. Then follows, ending at the south-west corner, from which you cross over to the palace, the "*Parian*," a great bazaar, where the lower and common classes are fitted out with every possible article of dress and ornament, both of foreign and national texture and make; but still, on the whole, presenting a truly Mexican appearance. Near one corner of the plaza, sit the "*Evangelistas*," letter writers employed by those deficient in calligraphy;—lovers' letters—business—family—any sort of letter you

like to dictate. In the centre of the square are the municipality, a dirty-looking place, and the "*Lonja*," the exchange of the city, open to native and foreign subscribers; offering every facility both for business and pleasure. The great salon is a large and handsome one, properly fitted up, and well supplied with foreign and domestic papers and periodicals. Beyond, is an excellent billiard room; and refreshments are always to be had. The *Lonja* is managed by a joint committee; and here, subscription balls and concerts (for the *élite*), are sometimes given. We attended some of both, and found them extremely well conducted. At Herz's concert, I had the honour of an introduction to general Herrera, and his daughter; and I found him, as I have found almost every man in power I have known in Spanish America, unostentatious, and indulging in that sort of happy familiarity, characteristic of the Spaniard, which never descends below the mark of good breeding.

From a street running parallel with the palace, and into which you turn from the "*Parian*," you enter on the great market of Mexico; and as far as the fruits and the vegetables go, it is a very

wonderful display. Such an abundance and such a variety of the vegetable productions of nature can nowhere else be seen. The climate of Mexico allows of every production both of tropical and cold climates; and its very numerous indigenous plants and fruits being added to those of almost all other countries, the result is quite striking. The markets are principally supplied by the Indians, who bring their stuffs by the canal from Chalco. Mr. Bullock was quite in raptures with the market; and he tells us it was his constant morning's excursion. "I was never tired of examining their fruits and vegetables," he says; and I say the same myself. I do not think you have any Eurropean fruit which you may not find here; and if you add "various kinds of bananas, plantains, pawpaws, custard-apples, soursop, citrons, shaddock, ackee, sapotes" (three or four quite distinct kinds), "abocatas, tunnals, pitalli, ciayotte, chennini, genianil, pomegranates, dates, annonas, mangoes, star-apples," etc. —not forgetting, as Mr. Bullock does, the finest of all fruits, the chirimoya, the Aguacáté (which is the Peruvian Palta, a delicious fruit), and many others—you may conceive the variety which the market offers to the eye, and ministers to the

taste. With animal food, Mexico is also well supplied; but they have only one kind of good fish, something like a whiting (not so fine), caught in fresh water. Wild-duck from the lakes is so superabundant, that they are brought down by a cannonade, rather than by shooting. Frogs are eaten, though rarely; and the most curious of their delicacies are mosquito's eggs, taken in myriads by lines laid across the marshy grounds about the lakes.

The *leperos* have often been incidentally mentioned in these pages, without being exactly defined. Many others *have* defined them; but none, I confess, to my own satisfaction. They are not professional beggars, although their rags, tattered garments, torn blankets, filth, and apparent poverty would entitle them to rank as such. All *leperos*, they say, are thieves. I will not back this assertion; but I do think that almost all thieves and pickpockets in Mexico are *leperos*. In picking pockets they are particularly expert. They will work merely to live; but assuredly they do not live to work. Idleness is their supreme delight. The *pulqueria*, or a sunny corner, is their choice retreat; yet processions, the churches,

promenades, swarm with *leperos*. They will do all sorts of odd jobs to gain a few *clacos*, or pence. When the streets are flooded and totally impassable during the heavy rains, the *leperos* ply as ferrymen—whip you up in their arms, or take you on their backs, at all the worst crossings. Of course they are fond of gambling; but they are also great politicians, and listen in the "strangers' gallery," with serious interest, to the debates in the chambers. Their modes of employment are numerous; for work they must sometimes, although many of them, no doubt, prefer to thieve. Yet among them are some of the most ingenious workmen in wax and other materials. In short, they are ready for anything and everything, to supply their few wants beyond *pulque*. To a foreigner they are a riddle, to the city of Mexico they are undeniably a disgrace.

The beggars of Mexico are very numerous, and many are very disgusting; while no sort of police whatever seems to be exercised over them.

From *leperos* and beggars, one naturally goes to *pulque*, the nectar of such classes. It is obtained from the aloe, or *Agave Americanus*, called in Mexico the *maguey*. When it attains its height,

the great stalk and flower are cut down, and the trunk is so scooped out as to leave a hollow recess, whence the fluid, which is rapidly and abundantly distilled by the plant, is sucked off through a tube, and conveyed to a leather bag, or *bota*, by the Indian labourer who has charge of the plant. Then the juice is left to ferment, and is of a considerably intoxicating nature. I only tasted it once, and never had the slightest desire to repeat the trial. Each full-grown plant is estimated at eight dollars; so that, as it comes to maturity in eight years, it increases in value one dollar per annum. It is cultivated in fields with as much care as we cultivate wheat, giving profitable returns to the *hacendado*. The *maguey* is chiefly, if not only, grown as a farming product in the state of Mexico Proper; and the extent and importance of the trade may be inferred from the fact, that the *carriage* alone of the article to the city, the centre of consumption, costs three hundred thousand dollars annually.

Throughout Mexico, according to its varied latitudes, you have in active cultivation almost every production of nature—wheat, barley, oats—all our own cereal and green crops—the sugar-cane,

coffee, tobacco, cotton, rice, and minor products of warm climates. For cochineal the country is celebrated; and of timber and wood of every kind they have inexhaustible stores. Silver and gold I have only to mention, to make their importance understood by all. Quicksilver they also have; and iron-mines are in operation. In short, a country more abundant in every species of mineral and other riches than Mexico (even after her loss of New-Mexico and California, having still Sonóra and other parts), I do believe exists not on the face of the earth—excepting, perhaps, the United States, since their people have possessed themselves (after their own fashion) of such splendid territorial enlargements to their democratic empire as Texas, California, and New-Mexico.

The climate of Mexico, like its productions, is various; but throughout, I should say, salubrious. On some of its coasts, and particularly in the Gulf, it is held to be quite otherwise; but on this point, as I think I have shown in the earlier of these letters, there is much misapprehension. With proper care and precaution (which means, by omitting, and not committing, excesses), the climate, generally speaking, on the coast, I believe to be innocuous.

In the interior the climate, so far as I experienced it, is beautiful—here warm, there cold; but always healthy. But even in the city of Mexico you will do well to study the climate: you must not forget that you are near to the line, and you must live accordingly.

The rainy season, in the city of Mexico, is not unhealthy; but the rains themselves deserve some special notice. During the four months which, more or less, they last, they are marked by an almost methodical regularity—a fine morning and forenoon; torrents of rain from three P.M. till late in the night. The streets are so inundated on some occasions, that they are not only impassable, but appear exactly like canals. I have looked out on the Calle de Capuchinas, when in this state, after the lamps were lit (particularly during a crescent moon), with interest and pleasure. The light played and sparkled on the accumulated waters, and gave a truly picturesque effect to the canal-street, with its palaces on either side.

We have earthquakes in Mexico; and during our stay we experienced three or four smart shocks. The houses are admirably adapted to resist their effect. Notwithstanding, an earthquake is always

an awkward thing; and to find your chair moving, and all the crystal drops of the chandelier jingling, and to listen to a low, hollow, murmuring noise, with an odd coolness in the air, and to hear the people hastening into the street—all this is not pleasant, although it was the utmost extent to which our alarms were allowed to proceed. Of the great volcanic mountain, Popocatepetl, so close, comparatively, to Mexico, I have already spoken; and you must use your own discretion in estimating how far its fiery eruptions have connection with the labourings of mother earth under the capital.

Of the foreign commerce, internal trade, imports and exports of Mexico, I do not, in this slight work, pretend to treat. On these points I must refer to others, particularly to Mr. Ward and Mr. Brantz Mayer, who have elaborated these important features of the republic. I will only give one statistical fact, of a suggestive kind, which may not be inopportune.

The great export of Mexico is silver. Last year it is understood that twenty millions of dollars were coined; and assuming the amount of silver produced, but not sent to the mint, as 20 per

cent. of the coinage, we should have four millions of dollars more. Let us add, hypothetically, for gold, cochineal, vanilla, and minor articles of export, one million of dollars more—in all, twenty-five millions. We have here twenty-five millions of dollars, or five millions sterling, of exportable produce from Mexico per annum.

Supposing, therefore, the imports and exports to be balanced, Mexico now consumes, in one shape or other, five millions, *nett value in the republic,* of foreign produce and manufactures. The Custom-House revenue is levied on gross value of imports; and taking that at thirty-five millions of dollars, and the average duties on imports at 30 per cent., we should have an income from the Customs on imports of . $10,500,000
And take the Custom-House duties on exports at only . . . 1,500,000

We should have a total Customs income of $12,000,000
Properly recovered, perhaps three millions of dollars from internal resources of revenue might be calculated upon—giving ways and means per annum of $15,000,000.

This would be a very flourishing, although a very natural, state of affairs; but, unfortunately, it is one which we know does *not* exist. What the Government actually receives, I believe, *nobody* knows. That a large proportion of what ought to be public revenue, is turned into the current of *contraband*, I believe *every one* knows; but how much goes to the Government, and how much to the *contrabandista*, is a problem which I cannot pretend to solve. One thing, however, will be clear to every reasoning and reasonable man—that if Mexico would adopt a more liberal commercial policy than that which now cripples her revenue, and encourages the baneful system of smuggling, the country would reap an enormous harvest by the change, and lay the foundation of a prosperity which, as yet, the country has never enjoyed.

A remarkable feature in Mexican history now, is the utter discredit into which the military profession has fallen. There is no regular *army* worth mentioning—the National Guard supplies its place. I much applaud the change. There are still many generals, colonels, and officers of lower grade; but by one and all the uniform in public is eschewed. You never see

one in good society, or at the theatre, or other places of amusement. The uniform only appears on those public occasions or processions on which duty requires its use. The occasion over, the uniform is doffed. In former years, the *fiestas de San Agustin* were crowded with the most brilliant military dresses; this year, not one.

In speaking, by the bye, of religious processions, I have omitted to mention the grandest of all in Mexico, as in other places—that of *Corpus Christi*, which we saw to great advantage. On this solemn occasion the Host is carried through the city to the cathedral; and the whole of the public functionaries, including the president and his ministers and staff, the archbishop and all the dignitaries of the Church, the judges, etc., attend. This was the greatest display, in a *military* point of view, which we saw. The whole length of procession was lined by National Guards; and several regiments of these, with one or two regiments of the line (all that could be called into requisition), some squadrons of cavalry, and a good train of artillery, brought up the rear of the grand display. On *this* occasion the uniforms and dresses of the old generals and other field officers were quite

magnificent. The Church dignitaries were clothed in a still grander and more imposing way: their gold and silver vestments, their embroidered silks and brocades, their jewels and ornaments of every kind, were dazzling in the extreme.

The higher arts and sciences have made little progress in Mexico; and, under its present unsettled state of government, they continue to languish, which is natural enough. A knowledge and greatly extended use of machinery has grown up since the English Companies were established; and this branch goes on advancing. Of mining I have already spoken, as you are aware it is *the* science cultivated in Mexico. The Mexicans are curious artificers in gold and silver, both for use and ornament. Some of their figures are modelled in the most artistic manner; and yet most of the best and most ingenious workmen are amateurs in humble circumstances. The wax figures have been rendered celebrated in England by Mr. Bullock.* The *leperos* are great workers in wax; and their representations of Mexican manners, costumes, character, and of almost everything else they

* There was a full and very beautiful collection of these figures in the Exhibition of all Nations.—W. P. R. (1852).

attempt, are most admirable. In embroidery of every kind, the richest and the finest, Mexico is hardly to be surpassed by any other country.

In printing, in all its branches, great advances have been made in the city; and I wish I had space to give you a full account of one of the most interesting things, whether considered in itself, or in the view of progress, which I saw in Mexico—I mean, the printing and publishing establishment of Don Ignacio Cumplido: it well deserves a chapter of itself.

It comprehends printing in every possible variety and shape (with the exception, I think, of stereotype), plain and ornamental; lithograph, carried to a degree of very high perfection; book-binding in all its branches; periodical publications; a daily newspaper; illustrative literature; an "Annual" of much beauty—in short, everything connected with the press, in a truly creditable manner to the enterprising founder of the establishment. Then the machinery employed is all of a first-class order, principally imported from the most celebrated foundries in London; and, in fact, I could see nothing omitted which could tend to make Mr. Cumplido's establishment a

perfect model for those who chose to follow in his steps in Mexico. All this is very encouraging; and shows what may be done, under every disadvantage, where energy, industry, and intelligence form the basis of a novel and great enterprise.

But I have not yet mentioned what was the great characteristic of Mr. Cumplido's establishment; namely, its order, method, and perfect division of labour. Carried to an extent which I think I never saw surpassed, these essentially fundamental elements of successful enterprise have naturally led to the growing prosperity of Mr. Cumplido's great undertaking.

He himself, as you may suppose, was the fit interpreter of all his labours. Without ostentation, but with a sober enthusiasm in his calling, he delighted to show me exactly what he had done, and what he still proposed doing. He employs a very great number of hands, and is sedulous in studying their comfort and advancement. He has a school for the boys employed by him and under his especial charge; and while he rightly maintains the authority of the master, he appears to take a fatherly charge of all his workmen.

Mr. C— made me presents of various illustrations of his labours;* and I must not omit mentioning, that before we left, he sent H— one of the celebrated boxes of chocolate, made in Oaxaca, the lid and sides of which are adorned with figures and landscapes in miniature, characteristic of the country, perfectly and beautifully modelled, and all made from the pith of a tree.

What a world of good is such an establishment as Mr. Cumplido's in a new country calculated to produce! and therefore, I say, all honour to his name!

I have as yet said nothing of the *population* of the Mexican republic; and in mentioning it now, I can do little more than refer you to the statistics of my predecessors. The population has been roughly calculated at from seven to eight millions, of whom one million only are said to be white (or pure Creoles), and the remainder, Indians and castes, as Zambos, Mestizos, Mulattoes, etc. I cannot pretend to speak *ex cathedra*, but I should set down the Creoles at a somewhat higher figure,

* I have availed myself of one of them in my Frontispiece, the Lithograph there being a fac-simile of one produced by Mr. Cumplido, in a very handsomely got up account of the transfer of Yturbide's ashes to the Cathedral.

and the Indians and castes at a lower. Supposing seven millions to be the population, six parts of mixed breeds to one of original, is a heavy disproportion; but yet it may be so.

The city of Mexico is calculated at from 160,000 to 200,000 inhabitants. The first number is probably nearer the mark than the second.

If the statistics of Mexican population could be accurately drawn out, perhaps the most startling line would be that of robbers. In London we have two millions of inhabitants; in Great Britain and Ireland, twenty-five millions. How many *highway robbers* could we count in that vast population? In London, scarcely one; in the empire, a most insignificant number. Certainly, in Mexico it is otherwise; and to draw this long miscellaneous letter to a close, let me finish off with a robber story, which came under my own cognizance during my residence in the city of Mexico.

One cannot take a drive, or a ride, or a walk, beyond something like the centre of that city, with absolute security, if unarmed. Highway robberies have been perpetrated in the suburbs, —in the outskirts—in the streets—in the *paseo*

nuevo, with a daring and nonchalance proper to the Mexican *salteador*.

A much respected and somewhat fearless friend of mine, returning on a certain occasion with two companions from his hacienda, by the Tacuba road, in a close carriage, but altogether unarmed, passed the *garita* sometime after sunset. Within the precincts of the city therefore, and entering by one of the great thoroughfares, his carriage was yet suddenly arrested, the driver instantaneously dismounted by armed men, who quickly but calmly opening the doors of the vehicle, began at once the work of personal pillage. No one was near, resistance was impossible; so watches, purses, coats, waistcoats, hats, were instantly abstracted by the adroit robbers. The carriage was then permitted to proceed; and thus denuded, my friend with his two guests walked quietly into the drawing room of his town house, where part of his family and some company were assembled; and who, first with unmitigated astonishment, and then with hearty laughter, greeted their forlorn relative and his companions.

Amongst the company in the salon was a reverend padre, the daily *tertuliano* and intimate of my

friend. His reverence made no show of concealing his contempt for the pusillanimity of three men, who, at their very door, had thus permitted themselves to be robbed; and he only wished that *he* had been there, to shew how different would have been the result. My friend merely observed that he had no doubt of the padre's courage and daring, intimating that it *would* have been pleasant to have had the advantage of both in the dilemma in which they had been placed.

A fortnight afterwards, the affair of the robbery being forgotton, my friend invited his reverence—a customary matter—to pass a few days with him and some friends at his hacienda. In addition to other pleasures, the padre calculated, as usual, on a little quiet *monte,* of which he was very fond. The second day our host proposed an excursion to a neighbouring hacienda, whither all went, my friend and a companion on horseback, the others in two carriages. The first of these drove on at a brisk pace; the second, in which the padre and a friend occupied places, proceeded more leisurely, accompanied by the horsemen.

Presently a man came galloping up, and whispered to my friend the host. "I must return,"

he said to those in the carriage, "to keep an appointment I had forgotten, but drive quietly, and I shall soon overtake you." Our host galloped home, changed his attire, blackened his face, put crape over his eyes, armed himself; and with three or four of his men, similarly disguised, he quickly made up to the padre's carriage. Those with him were in the secret.

"*Alto !*—halt!" the pretended robber called out—and the terrified driver stopped. "*A tierra!*" was the next roar.

"*Qué es esto,*" said the reverendo, anything but at his ease; "what 's the matter?"

"*Ladrones!—Ladrones!*" said his companion;" "for heaven's sake, padre, let us get out and throw ourselves down—*boca abaxo* (literally, mouth down)."

His reverence hastened to do as he was bid, and presently his host was striding over him with a rusty pistol in his hand.

"Eh!" said he in a disguised, harsh, and imperious tone, "give us all you have—quick—strip!" The padre took out his watch, pulled off his cassock, and stopped. "*Su dinero!*" shouted my friend (your money).

"My son," said the padre meekly, "how do you expect that a *pobre religioso* like me should have any money? I have none."

"Eh! eh!" exclaimed my friend, and drawing his long sword; "your money, I say, your money —or you die!"

"Padre, padre," said the companion, "do as I am doing; give up your money!"

The padre, terrified out of his wits, drew from a small inward side pocket a little leathern purse, containing four or five doubloons, intended for the possible exigencies of *monte*, but which he now made over to the robber; who then with his followers, took his departure.

My friend managed his business so well, that, again restored to his usual calm figure, and smoking his little paper segar, he was at the termination of the pleasure drive before the padre's carriage came up; and from him, still agitated by his sudden and unlooked for adventure, the robber received the particulars of the ferocious attack, and condoled with the padre accordingly.

"These robberies," said the reverendo, "are generally nothing; but there was a *devil incarnate* in this case—a *facineroso*—an assassin—who only

seemed to want the slightest excuse for murdering us all."

The padre was next day informed that the whole case had been laid before the Justice of the peace, whose people were scouring the country in search of the daring offenders. Of course, nothing came of it; for, as you may suppose, the *Juez de Paz,* had no information laid. But some time after the padre's return to Mexico, my friend called on him and said: "Padre, I have news to give you: the parish priest of my district has delivered up to the *Juez, all* that was taken from you, ordering that no questions should be asked. Doubtless the ladron went to confess, and was absolved on condition of restoring all the fruits of his robbery."

The reverendo was afterwards told the true circumstances of the case; but, to avoid all disagreeable discussion, he professes still to believe that his friends would amuse him with a pleasant fiction; and that he has too faithful a knowledge of Don—— ever to have confounded "a devil incarnate," and a "*facineroso,*" with so good and respectable a man.

PART VI.

MEXICO TO ENGLAND.

LETTER L.

DEPARTURE FROM THE CITY OF MEXICO.

Vera Cruz, October, 1849.

It was a matter of no small disappointment to me, that my constant avocations in the city had not permitted me at any time to visit Cuernavaca, and its celebrated cavern of Cacahuawamilca, or more shortly (for it goes by both names), Cacahuamilca. Cuernavaca, a part of which is, as a generic name, called "Tierra Caliente," lies at a convenient distance for the traveller from the city of Mexico; and embracing, as the excursion does, the ruins of the pyramid of Xochicalco, the cavern just named, Cautla de Amilpas, Cocoyotla, and other interesting places, all who *can, do* go to this part of Tierra Caliente.

The beauties of the country and the surpassing wonders of the cavern I did not see; and therefore

I must refer you, for an account of them, to Madame C— de la B—,* and Mr. Brantz Mayer.

Having on several occasions expressed to Mr. Escandon my regret at leaving Mexico, without seeing some of the finer parts of it, comprehended under the name of "Tierra Caliente," he himself determined to come to the rescue, in a manner I very little expected. He told me, some time before our proposed departure, that he had made up his mind to visit Orizava, where the family

* Madame C— de la B— conceives that the cavern cannot be described; because, as she observes, "there is nothing with which the cave can be compared." But there are several celebrated caverns in Europe of the same *kind*, composed of stalactites and stalagmites, petrefactions and crystallisations; and he who has visited the caverns, mines, and petrifying wells of Derbyshire—the Rutland, the Cumberland, the Devonshire, the Fluor, and the Speedwell caverns—can form a tolerably exact idea of the cavern of Cacahuamilca. The difference lies in the *extent* of the latter. It is like most of the wonders of nature in the New World—altogether gigantic in its proportions. Indeed, the *termination* of the Cacahuamilca cavern, after passing through saloon after saloon, galleries, and amphitheatres, for *miles*, has never been reached.

A beautiful, but small, cave, which I have visited, was a few years ago discovered in the Cheddar cliffs, Somersetshire; and it displays very comprehensively, though on a reduced scale, the wonders of the stalactite and stalagmite world. Some of the conformations are altogether wonderful.

had possessions, and he had interests of magnitude; and thence to proceed to New Orleans to meet his sister, then on her way to Mexico from Europe. He gave such an invitation as could not be refused, to H— and myself, to place ourselves under his wing, and to proceed to Vera Cruz, instead of going by the ordinary route by which we had come. Thus, unexpectedly, and much to my satisfaction, not only were H— and myself to escape from the toilsome and monotonous *return* journey to the coast by the way we came; but, under the best auspices, I was about to visit a part of Mexico quite out of the usual beat of travellers, and abounding with objects of interest both natural and social.

We had already made so many social acquisitions during our stay in Mexico; we had been treated with so much kindness on all sides; so much had been done to render our residence agreeable; and the welcome and hospitality accorded to us had been of so purely disinterested a nature—that our grateful feelings were mixed with unfeigned regret in parting with so many valuable and kind friends—English, Mexican, and foreign—even though we were returning to our native

country. To Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh, in particular, our obligations were of a nature never to be obliterated from my daughter's or my own mind.

For the last two or three days we were very much occupied paying farewell visits to all our friends. On the 5th of October we dined with Mr. Doyle; and the following day, the eve of our departure, Mr. Mackintosh had a farewell party not only for us, but also for Doña Antonia Agüero and her daughter, who were to be our fellow-passengers to England.

Mr. Escandon's arrangements were, that he and we, accompanied by Don J. and Dr. Martinez del Rio, two more of Mr. E.'s guests, should proceed by the Vera Cruz route as far as Nopaluca, in the *diligencia*. Accordingly, on the 7th of October, H— and I (happily unencumbered by much luggage) were in the great establishment of Mr. Zuratuza; and we set off, on a beautiful morning, at five o'clock, for Puebla, accompanied by Mr. Escandon and the Messrs. Martinez del Rio, with a good escort for the road.

With such pleasant *compagnons de voyage*,

splendid weather, and incomparably fine scenery, time flew quickly on. If we were disappointed on our approach to the valley of Mexico, we were compensated on our departure from it. We had it, under a cloudless sky, in all its mixed beauty and grandeur — the morning sun giving a dazzling brightness to the snowy summit of Popocatepetl. We had also a better opportunity, on this occasion, of observing the different places through which we passed. Clearing the lake of Tezcuco and the Peñon Viejo and Tlapishuatla, we came to the town of Ayotla; then, passing by Amaluca and the Venta de Cordova, we arrived, about eleven A.M., at Rio Frio, where our old acquaintance, the German hostess,* who was particularly pleased once more to see H—, welcomed us all, and again gave us a famous breakfast, to which a six hours' drive lent a keen relish. We went on to Tesmelucos, an Indian village; and, changing horses at San Martin, had time to see this rather neat and clean-looking town, of some historical celebrity. The *Hacienda de Santa Rosa* was our next point; and as we approached Puebla, we had

* Vol. I. p. 320,—where, by the way, an error of the press, line 7 from bottom, has converted Frio into "Fris."

a fine view of Cholula, and the ruins of its far-famed pyramid. To what use it was employed by those who built it (the aborigines), is not now known. When discovered, it was found to rise to four stories; but its base stands on an area of 1,355 feet, although its height now is only 172 feet. Its traditions are lost even to the Indians. It is constructed of *adobes*, or sun-burnt bricks, interspersed with layers of plaster and stone-work. Behind it, has been erected a Catholic church, surmounted by a dome, and dedicated to *Nuestra Señora de los Remedios*.

Before entering Puebla, you pass a handsome bridge which spans a small stream, here crossing your way.

At Puebla, where we arrived at half-past four P.M., we met Messrs. J. and A. Escandon, and Bringas, who were to form part of our brigade, and Mrs. Landa and family, going direct to Vera Cruz, where we were again to meet. I had time on this occasion to take a better view of Puebla, visiting its public gardens and other objects of interest, all denoting the importance of this fine city.

At the great *Diligencia* hotel, a long *table d'hôte* was laid out at half-past six, and we all joined it.

The party was pleasant and merry; but we retired early, to be ready for an early start in the morning. Another friend had joined us for the Orizava tour—a retired colonel advanced in years, a relative of the Messrs. E—, very lively, of the old school, and extremely amusing as a fellow-traveller.

At five A.M., Monday, the 8th, two diligences started—Mr. Escandon having secured one entirely for his own party; seeing we now mustered eight in number. After passing through the two towns of Amazoe and Acajété, in no way remarkable, and skirting the Cerro del Pinal, we got to breakfast at Nopaluca; and here our *diligencia* travelling ended.

From this point our picturesque expedition began; and after the two *diligencias* had departed on their weary and dreary way for dismal Perote, the Nopaluca Diligence Inn presented an animated appearance. The plan of the campaign, if I may so speak, had been arranged and superintended by Don Joaquin Escandon; and, under his orders, it was very admirably carried out.

Two open travelling-carriages of the family—the *coche de campo* and a handsome *caratela*—were drawn up to the door, and many good things for country travelling were stowed away in them.

To the family coach six fine mules, and to the *caratela* four equally good, were harnessed. Three or four saddled horses were then brought up, led by grooms. Then came sumpter mules, which took our baggage and many creature comforts; and relay mules for the carriages followed. Don Joaquin's favourite gardener (going down to carry out some improvements at the *hacienda*) and his "tiger" (a black), a butler, and Don Manuel's body servant, Ventura, all mounted, completed our travelling array. In the carriages went Messrs. M. and A. Escandon, J. and P. Martinez del Rio, and Bringas, Colonel, Garmendia, H—, and myself. Don Joaquin, dressed in the handsome costume of a Mexican country gentleman, rode a beautiful horse, saddled and caparisoned *à la Mexicaine;* for he ever preferred the saddle to a cushioned seat in a carriage We were in all, I think, twenty-three souls; all our attendants, drivers, and muleteers being domestic servants of the Escandon family. Thus we made our start; while at the same time the clanking of arms and accoutrements informed us that our *escort,* chosen from the "tobacco" guards, and headed by one of their officers, had mounted, and were dashing past us, to head the cavalcade.

LETTER LI.

NOPALUCA TO ORIZAVA.

Vera Cruz, October 1849.

VERY soon after we left Nopaluca, by the Orizava road, we entered on a country full of magnificent mountain scenery, clothed, as ever, with the finest woods of the richest foliage. We followed a road made on the mountain side, and skirted the smiling valleys below. We halted in the vicinity of a very noble estate, the *hacienda de San Francisco*—the palace-like building standing on a slight declivity of the table-land behind, surrounded by plantations, and commanding a view of the great valley and mountain-ridges which stretched out in front.

Here we changed mules and horses; our escort drew up in line, saluted us, and was replaced by a new corps.

From San Francisco we had to proceed, that

evening, to the *hacienda* of Santa Ana, a patrimonial estate of the Escandon family, and where preparations had been made for our night's lodging. The distance was about five leagues; and as we advanced, the table-land, as far as the eye could reach, stretched away on every side, covered with immense crops of barley and Indian corn. These are chiefly raised for the breeding of pigs, which are here extensively reared by farmers.

The heat of the afternoon knocked up our carriage-mules; and Don Antonio Escandon and I took to pedestrianism, six or seven miles from Santa Ana. The walk was somewhat toilsome, but novel and interesting. We tried near cuts through heavy fields, and found we had only further to walk. We skirted the town of San Andres, lying in the very lap of the great Orizava mountain; and we did not get to Santa Ana till after dark, both of us not a little fatigued with our long walk over heavy roads.

The *gathering* at the manor-house of the *hacienda de Santa Ana* had a feudal aspect. Two or three friends and neighbours who had gone out on horseback to meet the Messrs. Escandon, swelled the coming retinue. The great *patio*, after we

entered, was a gay and busy scene, filled with travellers, friends, retainers, carriages, horses, mules, and escort—all preparing first for a good dinner, and then most of us for a good night's rest, after a very long day's journey.

The dinner-table we found laid out in the great salon, with about thirty covers; and at half-past seven P.M. we sat down to our abundant and excellent cheer. Several guests from San Andres had come in to welcome the lords of the soil, and among the rest, el Señor Cura. But the most interesting and amusing personage was a distant relative of our hosts, Don Manuel Argüelles, a man of infinite humour, a poet, and an unsurpassable improvisatore.

The dinner withdrawn and the wine and the fruit left on the table, the *brindis*, or "toasts and sentiments" went round. Fun and wit sparkled with the wine. Many off-hand and good *brindis* were given. Every one of Don M. Argüelles's were capitally and quite poetically improvised. In many of them I could not detect a flaw, and every one had a good *point*. Of the many, here is one as a specimen of the Spanish, only presuming that the *brindis* was addressed to Don Manuel, and had

reference (in very high terms to make the rhyme suit) to his friendship for myself.

Bien contemplo que en el viage,
Placer tu alma encontraria,
Por venir en compañia
De un ilustre personage.
Tu amistad no se relaje,
Conservala intacta y pura
Supuesto que tal ventura,
A pocos es concedida
En esta mesquina vida
De tormentos y amargura.

The following *punning* impromptu by M. Argüelles, was made on another occasion. A young lady of San Andres, named Angeles (diminutive Angelita), having been courted for seven years by a gentleman called Don N. Camino, at last gave her hand to a stranger, whose Christian name was *Angel.*

Siete Años por un *Camino (road)*
Angelita transitó:
Pero del Fresnillo vino
Un *Angel* que la indicó
Que *no era ese* su destino.

"Angelita went for seven years by one road, but an angel from Fresnillo came and shewed her that her destiny lay not in that way."

The company broke up at eleven, and then we

retired to beds provided for all, H. having the state bed-room of the house.

On Tuesday morning, the ninth, we were astir at five o'clock. Our coffee was discussed, and our preparations finished by seven, when we started as the day before.

We passed through and examined the picturesque town of San Andres, the capital, as it might be called, of the district. Thence, winding round to the opposite side of Orizava, we got to a rising ground, from which we obtained a truly magnificent sight of the massive proportions of the mountain. We were at its very base, which formed a complete garden. We seemed to be almost within reach of the noble summit, which rose majestically above us, undisturbed by lesser eminences. The rising sun, in the clear morning, shone upon the snow of dazzling brightness which capped this most beautiful of all mountains, and filled the mind with indescribable feelings of wonder, awe, and delight. The altitude is upwards of seventeen thousand feet, and nothing interfered to distract the attention from its wondrous height. To view the peak of Orizava from the far distance is grand; but to be placed thus in proxi-

mity to its giant proportions is sublime. I have crossed the Andes, and gazed on Tupungato, the highest peak of the whole four-thousand-mile range—superior even to Chimborazo; but as it rises gradually for leagues from the level of the sea, and is surrounded by other mountains, it does not appear to the eye nearly so elevated as Orizava.

As we continued to wind round its base, we diverged from the main road, and cut across to the Cañada de Istapa, or, as now called, de Morales. Still as we receded, mile after mile, Orizava towered above us, as if we had not budged from the spot where we rested and took our first view. We seemed still to be at the base; and all the difference was, that at every turn of the road we saw some new and striking beauty in the lap of this wonderful work of nature.

At Morales we stopped to breakfast, and a most amusing affair it was. A rough, dirty, large and substantial homestead; dogs, cats, and pigs; earthen floors, wooden platters and spoons, two or three saw-like knives, and as many one-pronged forks, for all the party; dishes which, in their cookery, could not have altered for a couple of centuries; a table for half of us, and old

cupboards for the other half to stand at and eat, either with one-pronged forks or with their fingers. It was laughable and very entertaining. Don Joaquin was in despair; his people were employed in every direction; but (I am glad to say) he could not take the relish of the breakfast out of it. For myself, I never enjoyed one more in my life.

After leaving Morales, we entered on one of the great wonders of this part of Mexico, called the "*Cumbres*" or "Summits." It was a wide carriage-road, made at an incredible expense, and crossing a succession of mountains and narrow intervening valleys. The road zig-zagged the whole way, and that, from the abruptness and great height of the mountains, at the sharpest possible angles. Even so, the road rose and fell on very steep inclinations, and in fact as our line of carriages and horses stretched out, one part going due south, and another due north, we were always within speaking distance of one another. From each of the "*Cumbres*" we obtained magnificent views of the valleys under us; and when in these, we seemed to be completely hemmed in by the surrounding heights. The road *ought* to be paved all the way, but there are many gaps and roughnesses, although constant

repairs are going on, and a toll is levied to pay for them. The heavy torrents, however, which pour down during the rainy season, are scarcely to be withstood by human exertions. When dark, the road is in many places very dangerous.

At length, after an arduous march, the most lovely and fertile of all valleys—that of Orizava—opened up its beauties to our wondering eyes. This valley is twenty-four miles in length, and is watered by a fine stream throughout. The scenery I must leave to your imagination, for it baffles description.

At the pleasant and lively little town of Aculzingo, we were received by the director of Mr. Escandon's great cotton factory at Orizava, Mr. Thomas Grandison, of Glasgow, accompanied by other friends.* Proceeding onwards, having about seven leagues still to accomplish, we fell into the main road at *El Ingenio* (the Engine Mill), another small town, having a very fine and powerful course of water, running by it; and we entered the city of Orizava in the dusk of the evening, stopping at the *Administracion de Tabacos*, where we were most politely and kindly received by El Señor Elguero, the *administrador* of the establishment. The house

* See Appendix.

is handsome, and of great extent: the rooms, as must needs be in TierraCaliente, large and lofty.

We found a banquet prepared, and sat down, fourteen in number, to enjoy it; and at night we dispersed. Don Manuel, H—, and I, accompanied Mr. Grandison to his house at the factory, "*Cocolapan,*" about a mile off: Messrs. J. and T. Escandon, and their uncle, the Colonel, remained with Mr. Elguero; Mr. Bringas went to a brother settled in Orizava; and the Messrs. Martinez del Rio took up their residence with Don Francisco Vallejos. We ourselves got installed into most capital quarters, and after nineteen hours of travel and movement, we enjoyed our repose.

One word of statistics here, in reference to the department of Orizava. It forms part of the state of Vera Cruz: is divided into three cantons—Orizava, Cordova, and Cosamaluapam: has sixty-three "Pueblos," towns, and villages, and about 100,000 inhabitants. Of these, from 8,000 to 10,000 form the population of the city of Orizava, which boasts of many excellent houses and good streets. What we should call the *High Street* is, I think, the widest I have seen in Spanish America, where quadrangular uniformity is the basis of all

the towns. All tropical productions flourish in the department; but the two staple articles are, tobacco and coffee.

We spent Wednesday, the 10th, in viewing the immediate beauties of Cocolapan, and in a minute inspection afterwards of the factory. When I tell you that, first and last, it cost the parties who erected it about one million two hundred thousand dollars, you may imagine its extent and the high perfection of every part of its numerous buildings and works, and of its machinery. When this sort of property became depressed, a very few years ago, Mr. Escandon purchased the Fabrica de Cocolapan, and all its appurtenances, for a very much smaller sum than it had cost.

Mr. Grandison is a son of the engineer of the same name in Glasgow, and he has, as it were, been born and bred in the midst of machinery and manufactures. To his practical knowledge of his business, he unites general intelligence, energy of character, urbanity of manner, and patience of temper (the latter so indispensable in his business in Mexico); and accordingly, you may suppose what is the fact, that all proceeds prosperously and smoothly under his rule.

We had a courier this day, from Mexico, with our packet and other letters; and to our great regret, we found that Mr. Escandon's communications compelled him to give up his trip to New Orleans. He was called on to return to Mexico, without even going as far as Vera Cruz.

The next day (Thursday) was given up to an inspection of Orizava, and to a large party given by Mr. Elguero, at whose house, to our great satisfaction, we found our esteemed poet Argüelles had just arrived. The metal was too attractive at Orizava to allow him to remain at San Andres; and so he had followed us. He had been benighted among the "*Cumbres*" after very heavy rains, and was in no small danger; and his indignation that for such bad roads he should have had to pay a *toll*, broke out, as much fun went forward after dinner, in the following impromptu :—

Por lograr el placer cierto
De veniros á abrazár,
Hè tenido que pasar
Mil trabajos en el muerto.*
Vengo de lodo cubierto

* "Muerto"—la Cuesta del Muerto—the dead man's hill is full of danger to traverse during the rainy season. The hill, or, as we should certainly call it, mountain, forms the crossing from the valley of Charchicoumla to the city of Orizava.

De la Cabeza ā los pies,
Y asi, Manuèl, qual me vès,
El piage se me ha exegido,
Que pagar hé resistido,
Por que de Justicia—*no es.*

Here to meet the certain pleasure
Of a parting, kind embrace,
Dangers have I, without measure
In Muerto dared to face.
Smeared with mud from head to foot,
Shaken, bumped, and bruised to boot.
Yet, oh Manuel !* in this plight,
Toll exacted was from me:
I resisted such a right,
Sure that just *it could not be.*

Mr. Argüelles kept us in great merriment during the evening with his droll accounts of his disastrous journey, interspersed with his poetical toasts. One of them addressed to H— was full of gallantry; and his concluding one called on all present to "*brindar*" to the favours which Mexico had constantly received at the hands of England.

Next morning (Friday), before breakfast, we all made an excursion to a beautiful place called Rincon Grande, in order to view a celebrated waterfall there. We got to the edge of a wooded

* Mr. E. was one of the road trustees.

precipice which overhung a deep dell, down which rushed a mountain stream. Descending, we found at this part of the river two or three islets, rocks, and immense trunks of trees, which lay in a rapid of the stream. Its course thus obstructed, it rushed round the impediments with incredible force and impetuosity; while the curves again meeting under the precipitate bank, formed a whirlpool, which added a striking feature to the scenery of the place. Another fall, higher up the river, at Zoquitlan, is composed of one deep sheet of water, said to be extremely fine, but a visit to which we were unable to accomplish.

We spent the remainder of the day (after partaking of a grand Mexican breakfast at the Fabrica), between Cocolapan and Orizava, with an excursion in the neighbourhood, through a charming country. In the evening we went to a nice little theatre which, with very creditable performers, Orizava possesses, and we returned on foot to Cocolapan sufficiently late to have the light of the waning moon.

On Friday, the twelfth, we began preparations for our departure for Cordova. We paid our farewell visit to many agreeable Orizava friends,

including Mr. Nieto, a clever and entertaining naturalist. His collection was extremely curious, particularly as illustrative of the natural history of the province of Orizava; and he made me up, as a reminiscence of the place, a small case of the feathered tribe, well prepared, and containing some handsome ornithological specimens. We went to an evening party given by the Señora Vallejos (with whom our friends Messrs. M. del Rio were staying), in order to introduce us to a more extended circle of the good families here. We had dancing and music, and, by a Spanish gentleman, some inimitably well-sung comic songs—those of Andalusia, which for racy humour cannot be excelled. We were much pleased with all the genuine tokens of kind-heartedness which we received—always refreshing to those who have lived in great cities, where the feelings are either blunted, or their warmth hidden under the cold conventionalities of mixed society.

LETTER LII.

ORIZAVA TO VERA CRUZ.

Vera Cruz, October, 1849.

On Saturday, the 13th, then, at an early hour of the morning, we bade adieu to our kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Grandison, and our old party, (Colonel Garmendia, however, replaced by Mr. Argüelles), took our way to Cordova. We gradually got into the richest and most luxuriant scenes of this part of Tierra Caliente. As we approached the old-fashioned, primitive town, the coffee plantations rose about us, and the plants in the fields adjoining the road, mixed gracefully with the tall hedges on either side. You know how beautiful the coffee plant is, when nurtured and strengthened by a tropical sun and a rich soil. The beans, yet in their dark green, hung in clusters, clothing the plants with a great additional beauty. We got to Cordova between ten and

eleven, and alighted at the house of Mr. Saenz, by whom, and his family, we were expected. After one of the old and accustomed Mexican breakfasts, we sallied forth to view the town. There was a primitive and old-fashioned air about it—a peaceful and quiet aspect—which I have never seen exceeded. The Plaza is large and airy; and the municipal and other public buildings run along two sides of it. On another side is a sort of conjoint market and bazaar, where many incongruous things are sold. In the plaza also, of course, is the parish church of Cordova, redolent like everything else of the olden time. It was a pleasant morning's stroll.

In Mr. Saenz's *garden-patio*, I found the most magnificent parasitical plant I had ever seen in my life. It spread over the whole length of the long and high wall to which it clung, and was covered from one end to the other with a splendid light blue flower. Mr. Saenz, seeing how much I admired the plant, had one of its large bulbous roots dug up for me, carefully matted, and placed in one of the carriages, where I had also, by the by, a magnificent collection of air plants, very rare in Europe, and gathered in the wildest districts of Cordova.

We set forward after the mid-day heat, and at sunset arrived at the finest of the Escandon estates —that of "the Potrero." I find jotted in my note-book—"Describe the beautiful scenes of this day"—but easier said than done. I have, doubtless, long ago tired you with my scenic sketches of Mexico, where, in its natural aspect wonder rises upon wonder. Suffice it here to say, that every step we took increased the beauty and richness of the country around us.

We arrived at the *hacienda* at sunset, and, as had happened throughout our progress, we found every preparation made for us; and they were similar to all the others preceding—comfortable in every way. We retired pretty early; but towards one o'clock, I was awakened by sobs from the next room, where H— slept. I hastily half-dressed, went in, and found her very ill. Don Manuel also had risen and dressed, and was soon by my side. We called up Dr. Martinez, and I shall never forget the solicitude with which he attended our patient, and the skill with which, in two or three hours, he removed all anxiety from our minds. It is not always that, under such circumstances, one happens to travel with a medical

friend of such well-known and acknowledged reputation as Dr. Pablo Martinez.

"All right,"—at half-past six next morning, Sunday, the 13th, we were called to bid adieu to the three brothers Escandon, to Dr. Martinez, and Don Manuel Argüelles. I must not trust myself to say a word of my feelings on giving a last *abrazo* to Don Manuel Escandon and his brothers: from my simple relation of facts, you can infer how far H— and myself had become their debtors. It was a sorrowful parting. Mr. Argüelles, with all his *sans façon* and joyous spirits, did not like it; and Dr. Martinez looked pensively on the leave-taking.

The old family coach of Señor Vaenz—as best fitted for the heavy roads—was drawn up to the door, and our friend Don Martinez del Rio, H—, and myself, set off for San Diego, *en route* for Vera Cruz. We were silent enough, although the beauty of the Hacienda del Potrero, through which we passed, beggars all description. How pleased Sir William Hooker would have been to be with us. The tropical flowering shrubs—the orchids, quite unknown in Europe, as I believe, which hung on almost every tree—the trees them-

selves—the flowers without end—to say nothing of the ever-varying scenic beauty of the woodlands through which we passed—were something to astonish any one not accustomed to such climates, and such redundant beauties of nature.

The road would only allow the old family coach to carry us to the extremity of the "Potrero," a distance of three leagues.

Here we found three *literas,* and the necessary relay of mules waiting for us, accompanied and superintended by the faithful Ventura, Don Manuel's body servant.

After passing the various points and villages of Chiquihuite, Puente del Macho, Paro Ancho, El Camaron, and Palo Verde, we approached the river Xamapa. But two hours ere we had done so, daylight had closed in upon us, rendering the latter part of our day's journey half amusing, half alarming, for we constantly got separated in the dark woods,—the mules got tired,—we kept hailing one another—deviating from the road—uncertain whether to go on or stop. Ventura contrived always to keep me near to H—, but Mr. Martinez was sometimes so far from us, and sometimes so long of coming up, as to make us

quite uneasy about him. In short *litereros*, passengers, *arrieros*, and mules, staggered up to the banks of the river, I dont exactly know how.

The crossing, too, in utter darkness, was a tremendous business, for the *paso* is very wide indeed, a sort of estuary to grope through, which, in *literas* with mules tired out, deaf to remonstrance, and impervious to blows, was a somewhat nervous operation. At any rate, we gave "*Gracias a Dios*" when we fairly found ourselves in the miserable village of San Diego.

Such a night as there, passed I never. We first went to one horrible sort of public-house, but it was so full of men, women, horses, mules, and other living creatures, that Ventura went in search of some other. He hit upon one, where we had at least the open corridor in front to ourselves. To this place our *literas* were brought, and arranged as beds. Is was now ten o'clock, P.M., and we were to be stirring at three, A.M., by phaetons sent from Vera Cruz. We had had seventeen hours of travel, pleasant as regarded the country, but by no means easy, as touching our bodily comfort,—in point of fact, we were altogether knocked up, and desirous of rest.

But behind the house, in a corner, lay a dying horse, whose convulsive movements, in its agony, every now and then distressed our nerves; in another corner a dog howled to the stars; in the house four or five children lay at death's door with hooping cough; and to listen to them and to the wailing mother and attendants was something terrible. The smells which assailed us were anything but pleasant; and if you add to all this, that the mosquitos seemed to take a demoniacal pleasure in blistering every accessible point of our bodies, you will comprehend the nervous impatience with which H—, Don José, and myself, without any attempt at sleep, awaited the hour of half-past three, A.M.

Monday, the 15th, was the last day of the expiring moon, so the night was as dark as pitch. Two *volantes* or phaetons had been ordered for us from Vera Cruz; so, insisting on Ventura's returning to his master at Orizava, we left San Diego under the guidance of two lantern-bearers, who, marching in front, shewed our drivers, as they best could, the sinuosities, the ruts, and the holes of the road. We drove through a wood, and many were the bumps and thumps we received

before daylight broke. But, as the sun rose, we sped our way cheerily through a pretty country of wood and pasture; and arriving at eight, A.M., were received, as we had been before, with a hearty welcome.

It was our fortune, or rather our misfortune, on this occasion, to participate largely in the annoyances and troubles consequent on a strong "Norther." It commenced the day we arrived at Vera Cruz; but as the packet had not yet come in, we did not, then, so much mind the gale.

On Tuesday, the 16th, our friend Beraza brought us the city correspondence, and I received mine from England. Much of my convention, of which I have yet to speak, I found was considered disadvantageous by the Committee of Spanish American Bond-holders; but I consoled myself with the belief, that all minor difficulties would disappear upon my arrival in London.

Wednesday, as the day before, the "Norther" kept acquiring force, but still no packet appeared. Meantime we lived pleasantly ashore, making the acquaintance of several of those who were to be our fellow-passengers. We found Madame L—

and her family, Madame G. de A— and her accomplished daughter, and Mr. H—, with whose father I had been connected, five and twenty years before, in the River Plate—the son now going home to visit his relations with his wife, a *Guanajuatense* lady. Here, also, I renewed my acquaintance with Don José Garay, a gentleman whose name has acquired a world-wide fame as the holder of the celebrated Tehuantepec privilege, to form a communication between the shores of the Mexican Gulf and those of the Pacific Ocean.

On Thursday, the 18th, our packet, the "Teviot," came in, with the "Norther" still unabated: but orders were issued to the passengers to embark the following morning.

On Friday, the 19th, accordingly, a note of preparation was sounded, and we were stirring at half-past five, A.M. The "Norther" had lulled, and we were all on board at eight o'clock. We ourselves, with our friend Mr. Garay, were the last to embark in the Resguardo boat, the breakers at the Mole still running high. Scarcely were we on board when the "Norther" again blew a gale, rendering the shipment of the silver impossible; so

that all hope of sailing that day was given up. We had the "Norther" all night, and in the morning it blew with increasing fury. We were miserable enough on board, fidgeting to be off, and yet despairing of a move for some days. We were sixty-two passengers in number; and no communication with the shore possible. And although our commander, Captain Rivett, a man of agreeable manners, did his best to keep us in good humour, the task, I fear, was somewhat difficult.

On Sunday, the 21st, we were still without a hope of starting, the gale being, although not quite, yet nearly as strong as the preceding day. The passengers were patient enough, although we had now lain forty-eight hours at anchor; but it was very trying. Captain Rivett sent a market-boat on shore, but nothing could be sent off; the breakers still sweeping over the Mole.

But Monday, the 22nd, brought a welcome change. The "Norther" had given way the previous evening, and Captain Rivett was then able to land. At six A.M. a busy scene commenced. In four hours $250,000 in specie and 200 bales of cochineal were shipped. The day was beautiful.

Our friends came off to see us; and at two, P.M., with a light breeze and calm sea, we were steaming through the ships in the harbour, on our way to Mobile and New Orleans. Such are the pleasures of a "regular Norther," and such was our departure from Mexico.

LETTER LIII.

MY MISSION TO MEXICO.

I HAVE hitherto avoided saying anything of the course of the mission which was the ostensible object of my visit to Mexico; but as it was of a public nature, and had no small bearing on the financial and even political affairs of the republic, I propose here to sum up, as concisely as I can, the results of my operations as commissioner of the Mexican bondholders.

On the 11th of June, I addressed a long letter to Mr. Arrangoiz, recapitulating all that had taken place since my arrival; and ten days after writing that letter, I determined to employ Don Ramon Olarte, a palace-broker, as a medium of communication between Mr. Arrangoiz and myself. Mr. Mackintosh, I am bound to say, did not approve of this step; but I took it after mature consideration, having at the same time, as I had throughout, the support and friendship of Mr. M. to depend upon, even although we might

differ somewhat as to the best mode of arriving at our common object.

I agreed to secure to Mr. Olarte one-half per cent. on such portion of the indemnity-money as we might recover, and to increase his brokerage to one per cent., should arrangements with the Government be made to my satisfaction.

I pass over all the difficulties which successively arose in my endeavours to arrive at such a final convention regarding the exterior debt of Mexico, as I believed would be at once carried here, and acceptable to the bondholders at home. Never was there a more arduous or more difficult task undertaken, considering the discordant elements which I was forced to blend into one. Suffice it to say, that after a fortnight's patient labour and anxious consideration had been exhausted in my negotiation with the Executive, Mr. Arrangoiz and I finally signed, on the 7th inst., the convention, which, translated into English, follows this letter.*

The Executive believed that they could secure the ratification of the settlement by congress; and I made no doubt that, after due explanation,

* See Appendix.

it would be at once accepted by the bondholders in London, as the very best bargain which, in her actual state, could be made for them with Mexico.

Mr. Mackintosh entirely approved of the terms which I obtained, as did Mr. Doyle, Mr. Escandon, and other immediate friends; while I may safely aver, that the public at large was surprised to find the universal anticipations of the total failure of my mission thus contradicted by the event. And on all sides the convention was characterised as highly favourable for the bondholders, even after all the new sacrifices I had made.

My undeviating object was to make a convention that could be practically carried out in its detail. To attempt this and a continuation of the *nominal* payment of the five-per-cent. interest was wholly and totally impracticable. Hence the concessions, which in this respect were for ten years, stipulated.

As soon as the terms for our convention were known, and indeed, *before* we had concluded, I fancy our opposing party began their machinations to defeat us in congress. The consequence was, from Monday, the 9th, a sort of crisis in public affairs,

which ended in the absolute resignation of Mr. Arrangoiz as minister of finance. He was, with many other absurd allegations, accused of having been corrupted by English gold, and, honourable and upright as any minister I have known, he indignantly refused to remain in office under imputations at once so monstrous and so unjust.

Meantime, with my friends, I was working, I may say, night and day to influence the ratification of the convention in the Chamber of Deputies, and, although we had many and *unscrupulous* opposers there, I had every reason to believe success would be on our side. The Senate also was moved to reject the agreement, but I knew that if the Chamber supported the Executive, the Senate would not withstand public opinion. In the Chamber we had almost all the respectable party with us, particularly Mr. C—, the President, a man who, for his integrity and abilities, stands certainly as high as any other in the country; while the three members of the Committee of Public Credit, all respectable men, were with us; and they determined to report favourably on the convention. I requested to have a conference with the Committee, which was agreed to. I had

also a most satisfactory interview with Mr. C—, the President of the Chamber; and indeed I was becoming favourably known to many of the leading men here, who desired to see justice done to the Bondholders.

I wished the question to be amply discussed by the public press; for the more the business was comprehended, the more reason we should have to anticipate a triumph. Mr. Doyle, although scarcely recovered from a very serious illness, continued to exert himself with energy on our behalf, and Mr. Mackintosh went on taking every step to secure our success. In short, nothing was left undone; and, for the honour of Mexico, as well as for her own good, we hoped, as we certainly did expect, that the contract would be ratified.

As we could not, however, be absolutely certain of success, I had resolved on my course, should the convention unfortunately be rejected by Congress. I intended to apply immediately to the Supreme Court of Justice for an order to oblige the Executive to pay the full amount of the *arrears* of interest, which form now a simple debt of the Government to the creditors, *uncon-*

nected with the Bonds. I had not the least doubt that such an order would be obtained. And I proposed applying by three separate petitions for each year's arrears, with interest thereon till the date of payment. We could not sue in this country for compound, but only for simple interest on the whole debt, as each portion fell due. But by applying for one year's dividends in each petition, we should lay the foundation for yearly applications in case of need hereafter, which I believed would be supported by her Majesty's Government.

Accordingly, I sent home copies of my letter to Mr. Doyle, and his answer regarding my proposed proceedings with the Supreme Court; and I begged the Committee not to lose a moment in waiting on Lord Palmerston, and endeavouring to induce him to send out his instructions to Mr. Doyle, by the way of the United States, in order to lose no time here.

I obtained some other advantages in my convention, on which I need not enter here, over and above the four and a half millions of dollars of the American Indemnity Money.

In my conference with the Committee of Public

Credit I was received very well. I dwelt for half an hour on the business, entering into all its details, and particularly into the great concession which the Bondholders had made, and the losses to which they had from time to time submitted. I laid before them the views of the Committee of Bondholders on this subject, and shewed them that I was in the predicament of carrying a contract which was distasteful to both parties. I expatiated on the disgrace which would accrue to Mexico if the contract were not ratified; and I shewed them how grateful they ought to be for the forbearance of their creditors. I also mentioned frankly all I was going to do, if the contract was *not* ratified. I retired with many assurances from Mr. Elguero, the chairman, that the Committee would support the Convention.

Mr. Arrangoiz having been offended with some proceedings of Messrs. John Schneider and Co., in regard to a dividend which was announced for payment in a sectional shape, he proceeded, with the sanction of the President and his own colleagues, to remove the Mexican Agency from the hands of their house. He gave the six months' notice required by agreement, and he named Colonel

Facio as Mexican Agent in London, with secretary and assistant to keep the accounts of the foreign debt. All this he did without communicating with me, although I heard of the proceedings through another channel; and I thought it would be right to shew Mr. Arrangoiz, that the bondholders could never consent to the receiving and distributing of their funds by a Mexican employé, however high and honourable, without any intervention on their part. Colonel Facio had previously taken his departure for England.

My reasoning on the matter satisfied Mr. Arrangoiz; and our conferences on the subject led to the special contract regarding the agency which follows the convention. I felt assured that it would meet the views of my constituents at large, though I should not have considered myself as in any way authorised to interfere with the rights of Messrs. Schneider and Co.; the removal of the agency having, in fact, been exclusively the work of the Government. Colonel Facio, whom I did not personally know, was said to be a gentleman of perfectly good faith, and desirous of doing whatever was right in his agency.

Mr. F. de P. Falconnet, agent and representative

of Messrs. Baring, Brothers, and Co., having left for the United States and England, to take his passage by the Great Western steamer, offered, in a very friendly manner, to be of any service in his power which might forward the interests of the Bondholders. I therefore agreed with him, that he should remain a short time at Washington, to ascertain how far the three payments of the indemnity money could be *at once secured* to the bondholders, and placed beyond the risk of eventualities between the United States and Mexico. Mr. Falconnet promised to use his influence quietly to bring about a friendly desire in Washington to meet the views of the bondholders, endeavouring also to engage Mr. Crampton's co-operation in the matter. Finally, Mr. Falconnet, who had on various occasions lent me his aid in carrying out my plans, offered to explain to the committee the whole course of my operations, and the motives and causes which led me to my final arrangements.

In regard to the parties with whom I had to treat directly or indirectly in forming the convention, I have to say, that Mr. Arrangoiz, the minister of finance, acted throughout with a

straightforwardness and good faith calling for the highest commendation. He showed the most praiseworthy desire to uphold the honour, and to fulfil, as far as he could, the obligations of Mexico towards her foreign creditors, the best proof of which will be found in the convention and auxiliary agreement. His Excellency the President gave his entire approval to all our arrangements; as did their Excellencies, Señor de Lacunza, the chief of the cabinet; General Arista and Doctor Jimenez, the other ministers, by whom our measures were unanimously adopted and sustained.

I am sorry to say, that the completion of the work was the last official act of Mr. Arrangoiz; for the day following he resigned his portfolio as minister of finance.

The bondholders were, throughout, under deep obligations to Mr. Doyle, Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, who warmly and efficiently seconded all my efforts in this business; and, of course, my tried friends, Messrs. Mackintosh and Escandon, were of the most essential service to me in carrying it to its completion.

LETTER LIV.

THE UNITED STATES.

St. Etienne (France), 20th October, 1852.

An old Scotch skipper who, many years ago, consigned his vessel to me in Buenos Ayres, and who, never having crossed the tropics before, continued his homely system of navigating by dead reckoning, drew up in the latitude of the river Plate, but in three or four hundred miles to the west of his right longitude. So he lengthened his passage by all this distance; and when one of his passengers was at last deputed by his bewildered companions to ask him whereabouts they were, the skipper answered, with great sang-froid, "Weel, accordin' to ma reckonin', we're amang the bushes lang ago!" In like manner, I have been navigating my book by dead reckoning. I am wofully out of my longitude; and if my readers will look at the paging here, they will find I have been among the bushes long ago. I mean

that, as the skipper ought to have been at Buenos Ayres when he was hundreds of miles from it, I ought to have been at *finis* a hundred pages back, whereas I am only now entering on our travels in the United States.

Now, although I have full notes of those travels, and feel inclined to have *my* say, as others have had theirs, about our transatlantic brethren, I must deny myself that pleasure almost *in toto*, satisfied as I am that a very great volume of matter such as mine, is more than likely to prove a very great bore, if not, indeed, a great discouragement to looking into it at all.

We sailed, then, from Vera Cruz, on the 22nd of October, 1849. The weather was very fine, and in four days we were to be in a country which for years I had desired to visit. Yet, when I began to consider the onerous charge I had undertaken, I was somewhat daunted as to the result. I had ten individuals (eight of whom could not speak English), to take charge of, directly or indirectly, from Mexico to London, including a tour by land of some thousand miles in the United States. However, I had prepared them

all for the worst, and they seemed resolved to carry out resolutely our great undertaking.

We had a pleasant, though somewhat rough passage (touching at Tampico); and we were five, instead of four days over it. We arrived off Mobile point at noon, 27th; and here a dispersion began. Some were for Mobile, some to take a small auxiliary steamer for New Orleans, and some were to remain in the packet to proceed by her to Southampton. It will scarcely be credited that only *two* passengers remained for the entire voyage, and even then, not because they liked it, but because of the additional expense of the United States' route. It was sad for an Englishman to see thus practically the superiority of another nation over our own, in what we so much pride ourselves — expeditious travelling. And I am bound, moreover, in justice to the United States, here to remark, that I sent all my original communications from Mexico, *viâ* New York, leaving the duplicates for the direct steamers; nor, as far as I can recollect, did any of my duplicates precede my originals in arrival. Such a state of things was sure to work its own cure; and it is pleasant to observe that we are now in a fair way to having

an efficient working of the Royal Mail Steam-Packet Company.

To return to the Teviot. Finding that a considerable part of Mr. Escandon's family were at Mobile, *en route* for Mexico, I determined to proceed thither alone—proposing to rejoin my party at New Orleans on the 29th, and leaving H— to take care, till then, of all our friends—a serious undertaking for her, but to which all assented willingly.

Mobile is a second New Orleans, renowned for cotton. When I had seen our Mexican friends, who were at the great hotel (I need scarcely repeat what so many have said, that everywhere in the United States you have huge hotels), and had made a comfortable breakfast, I sallied forth to pick up the latest English news. At the door I found a gentlemanlike American, and begged him to direct me to a reading room. "You are a stranger?" he said, in the interrogative style. "Yes, I am." "Then," said he, "I will accompany you to our reading rooms."

"Any particular news from England?" said I, as we walked along. He stopped, and stared at me. "Particular news from England?" he

repeated,—"Where have you been? *Astounding* news!"—and he made a full pause. I prepared myself to hear of a revolution. "Five eighths!" he exclaimed, with frightful energy—"Five eighths! by the morning's telegraph." I then found that speculation was running high in the "raw material" at Liverpool; and that the packet had brought news of a further fall or rise (I forget which) of five-eighths of a penny per pound in cotton. And I beg you to understand, that I am giving you literally what passed between my civil guide and myself.

The following day I spent most pleasantly with my new friends, and Mr. Eustace Barron, a gentleman of great celebrity, and of the highest standing in Mexico. He belongs to one of the prominent Irish families settled in Andalusia, of whom I have spoken in the first volume. Having two or three days to spare, Mr. Barron and Don Fernando Escandon resolved to go over to New Orleans with Mr. G— and myself, and there, on my arrival, I found my party "all right," at the palatial Hotel of San Carlos, a building which, if viewed as a mere *public house*, might, indeed, safely be called the eighth wonder of the world.

The New Orleans friends, for whom we had letters of introduction, were very kind, and shewed us all the wonders of this great capital of the south. The extent of the buildings in which the cotton is deposited, the quantities of the raw material, and the packing, cannot be viewed without unfeigned astonishment.

We walked along the *Levee*, on the 30th, accompanied by our friend Don J. Martinez del Rio, who had been our fellow-passenger thus far. We went to choose a steamer for Cincinnati,—for the *Levee* at New Orleans is a very different affair from the *levee* at St. James's. The former is a noble quay and embankment, stretching along the Mississipi, and forming the harbour, or we might almost say docks of the vast port. Steamer after steamer of mighty dimensions—ship after ship, of every kind, lay alongside this grand *Levee*, and shewed at once the extent of both the home and foreign traffic and commerce of New Orleans.

And such a puffing and blowing of steamers ready to sail! It was almost frightful, when high pressure came across one's mind. I said so to Mr. Behn, our kind New Orleans friend; and in answer, he gave me the comfortable hint to see that

Miss R— was always *well abaft* in the steamer, as *there,* in case of an explosion, the danger was least. Even at the *Levee*, not many days after our visit, one of the high pressure steamers exploded, with most disastrous results, close to the very spot over which we were walking.

We fixed on our steamer—one of the best—called the "Concordia." Next morning, the ladies did all their *shopping;* at 5 P.M., 31st, we went on board, and an hour afterwards were steaming up the Mississipi. Of this great aqueous highway of the States, so much has been written, said, and seen, that I may well afford to give but a passing glance at the seven days which we passed in stemming the tide of waters which, under the name of the Mississipi, flow from their source into the ocean. People, in general, complain much of the *monotony* of the vast forests through which the river chiefly flows: but for my part, I was so wrapt up in the magnitude of the woods, in the expanse of the waters, and sometimes for hours together in the stillness and solemnity of the scene, that all feeling of tedium, consequent on monotony, was banished from my mind. Besides, the Mississipi does not always bathe forests on

either side of its course: towns, villages, hills, villas, cultivated lands and farms, with occasional eminences, rise, at no great intermediate spaces, before your view; and finally, the steam-boats and vessels which you are constantly meeting and overtaking,—with the dangerous, but exciting amusement of racing with other boats, of which we had our share—all diminish the monotony of the Mississipi, such as it might doubtless be forty or fifty years ago.

On the 5th of November, and fifth day of our voyage, after having passed the towns of Natchez and Vicksburg, with other minor places, we arrived at Memphis, a rising town, like all those on this line of river, and of which we took a hurried view. Here we changed steamers, and prosecuted our voyage in one called the "Chief Justice Marshal."

The next place we made, New Madrid, is at this moment doing its best to outstrip the old and more celebrated city of that name; and on the 8th we left the Mississipi to enter on the Ohio at another aspiring place, Cairo, which stands at the junction of the two rivers. The scene here is very fine, and we enjoyed it under beautiful although very cold weather. We had Kentucky on one

side, and Indiana on the other. On the 9th, at an early hour, we arrived at Louisville, where we went on shore, having the advantage of a few hours' stay, while the steamer unloaded old and reloaded new cargo. Louisville is a very handsome city, with a regular go-ahead population. Judge: in 1810 it had 1,357 inhabitants; in 1820, 4,012; in 1830, 10,352; in 1845, 21,210. At the same rate of increase, doubling its population in five years, it had in 1850, 42,400; and at this present day, 1852, it must have nearly 60,000 inhabitants. So Louisville in forty years has doubled its population four times and a half. Going on at the same ratio for the *next* forty years, Louisville would contain in 1892 about a million and a half of inhabitants. We were on board our steamer at half-past ten, A.M., and at eleven set forward on our voyage. Before daylight of the 10th we were at the conclusion of our river passage, Cincinnati, the queen city of the West. So many travellers have made it familiar to the English reader, that I may safely pass it almost *sub silentio*. We found still alive there people who recollected the spot as part of the great forest; and now, the forest cleared, we have

a beautiful city of 100,000 inhabitants, and a cultivated country all around. As New York is the recipient of Irish immigrants, so of German is Cincinnati, the great point whence they spread themselves over the far west in agricultural pursuits. We spent one day here, and among its other wonders, we had an opportunity of seeing its porcine riches. About one-third of a million of hogs are annually slaughtered and cured in this place. Its total yearly exports amount to upwards of sixty millions of dollars. And of Cincinnati I have no time to say more than that we spent a delightful day in it and its environs.

Here we were to commence our railroad travelling; and, keeping to the programme of our tour, we could give only one day to Cincinnati. But the following day was Sunday, when there is no traffic on the railways, and special trains were here unknown. Nevertheless, I went in the evening to the terminus, and to the resident manager there explained our dilemma. With great politeness, he at once offered to communicate with his superior: and the result was the following curious document, which now lies before me.

"Mrs. G. de A—, Miss A—, Mr. Z—, Mr. S—, 4; Mr. Robertson, Miss Robertson, Mrs. Landa, her sister, her daughters, 6; Mr. Garay, Mr. J. Garay, Mr. and Mrs. H—, Mr. M—, 4; Mr. B—, 1; Mr. Sierra, 1; Mr. Castro, Mr. Castro, jun., 2; Servants, 2; in all 21 persons.

"Pass Mr. Robertson and twenty persons from Cincinnati to Springfield on L. M. R. R. $200.

"(Signed) P. W. STRADER,

"*Cincinnati*, 10 *Oct.*, 1849. *Agent.*"

A pretty formidable party to have under my charge; yet, with here and there an exception, all worked harmoniously enough.

So at ten, A.M, of Sunday, the 11th, a special train came up to the station to receive us, and off we set; although, by the bye, I ought to mention that, finding we should have nothing to eat at Springfield unless previously ordered, I despatched a telegraphic message, and received answer, that dinner would be ready for twenty-one at half-past three, P.M.

Our whole way to Springfield ran along the Connecticut river, and through wood-land, with some clearances to make room for towns and villages; and as we whirled along their main streets, great

was the surprise of the inhabitants to see a special train, the first that had ever travelled on the line, which enjoys the name of the Little Miami Railroad. A derangement of the engine delayed us till four P.M., when we got to the hotel of the pleasant and important town of Springfield. Here is the United States' armoury (the most extensive in the country), built round a square of twenty acres of ground; and 3000 men are employed in it. The town contains 20,000 inhabitants.

We found an excellent dinner prepared for us; and while my party were enjoying their coffee in the evening I walked out alone. I found hundreds of decently and respectably dressed people going into the different churches. Between two conventicles or Methodist chapels I myself passed three hours; and I listened with interest and curiosity to the fervid, although exaggerated, prayers and discourses in both places of worship. The earnestness of the listening congregation, and their devout deportment and appearance, struck me as being highly creditable to the people of Springfield.

We left that town at ten P.M. by the railway, and travelled all night, arriving at 11 A.M. at

Sandusky, on the south of Sandusky bay, and there, admiring the beautiful view we had of lake Erie, we immediately took boat to cross for Buffalo and the Niagara falls. The steamer was a splendid one, the weather fine, the scene at once grand and novel—a lake 250 miles in length, with a picturesque shore, which we skirted as we went along. I do not know that I ever enjoyed anything much more. The two principal places at which we touched were the towns of Cleveland and Ohio, the greater part of the former built on a table land eighty feet above the lower city, and commanding a boundless prospect. At Buffalo we arrived at nine A.M., the 13th, and there we spent the day, concluding it with music and dancing, at our grand hotel, of (as usual), enormous size. It is kept by a Quaker; and when dinner-hour approached, I found, to my horror, that he would let my Mexican friends and ourselves have nothing but water! It was a *temperance* hotel. The scene which ensued between us was laughable; but we arranged in the end, and had our *wine*.

The city is really handsome, and containing from 40,000 to 50,000 inhabitants; although in 1812, during the war, our attacking force left only two houses standing.

LETTER LV.

THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA.

St. Etienne, November, 1852.

HAVING much to see, we started very early next morning, for the falls; and, to reach them, we had to do twenty-two miles by railway to Schlosser, and thence a short distance by a stage-coach. By this time a considerable number of our party had separated from us, and only our more immediate friends accompanied us to the falls. We were, however, still fifteen in number.

Now with regard to the falls of Niagara and many other things which we saw in North America, I come too late to say anything which could be new or interesting. "Tout est dit, et l'on vient trop tard," as La Bruyère pathetically complains when he commences his Caractères,— "Le plus beau et le meilleur est enlevé. . . ."

Accordingly, of the Falls of Niagara and their surrounding beauties, I have little more to say than that we spent a long day in viewing them,

our enjoyment enhanced by the most beautiful weather. We saw, I believe, everything; and here I shall simply venture some facts to refresh the memory of those who have seen the falls, and to induce those who have not, to go and see them.

1. The quantity of water discharged over the falls is 370,000 tons, equal to 78,800,000 gallons *per minute.*

2. The falls are situated on the Niagara river, fourteen miles *above* Lake Ontario, and twenty-three *below* Lake Erie, on the New York side.

3. The river forms the outlet of the great upper lakes, which, with Erie and Ontario, drain an area of 40,000 square miles of land.

4 The extent of their surface is calculated at 93,000 square miles.

5. They contain nearly one-half of the fresh water on the globe's surface.

6. At a right angle to the N.E. the river is suddenly contracted in width from three miles to three-quarters of a mile.

7. Below the cataract, the river is half-a-mile in width, but 300 feet in depth.

8. The cataract is divided by Goat or Iris island, of seventy-five acres.

9. The principal channel is on the Canadian side, and forms the Great Horse-shoe fall, over which about seven-eighths of the whole is thrown.

10. A small island named Prospect re-divides the eastern channel between Goat Island and New York State, forming a beautiful cascade.

11. The fall on the American side is 164; on the Canadian side, 158 feet.

12. A bridge connects Bath and Goat Islands; and here the waters rush with the greatest velocity towards the abyss.

13. From the west part of Goat Island, the Terrapin bridge juts out, and projects 10 feet over the Horse-shoe fall.

14 A stone tower, 45 feet high, built on the rock at the verge of the precipice, with an open gallery at top, affords a view of the falls.

15. The descent to the bottom of the falls, on Goat Island, is accomplished by covered winding stairs.

16. You can pass from Goat Island, when below, a considerable distance *behind* the falls.

17. A ferry, quite safe, 100 feet below the falls, connects the two sides of the river.

18. From the foot of Table Rock, on the Canadian

side, you can pass 153 feet behind the sheet of falling water.

19. A steamer, called "The Maid of the Mist," runs to the very edge of the cataract.

20. The Niagara Suspension Bridge crosses the gorge of the river, between the cataract and the whirlpool, in view of both, the span being 800 feet long, 40 wide, and 230 above the water.*

21. The whirlpool, resembling in appearance the Norwegian Maelstrom, is three miles below the falls. The river here is only 30 rods wide,—makes nearly a right angle in its course, with a current of such velocity as to force up the water in the centre 10 feet above the sides.

22. Last—though, by his own account, not least—is Mr. Barnett's Museum, a short distance from Table Rock (Canadian side); but you must not believe in Mr. and Mrs. Stephen B. Sherwood and Company, of Jamesville, Onondaga, County New York, when they tell you, as they do, on Mr.

* At present, the bridge is only a carriage and foot-way, but when finished, the span or crossing will include a tube, 20 feet in width, by 18 in depth, the upper line of which will be traversed by a railway. Towers will finish off the extremities of the bridge, which, supported by sixteen wire cables, is supposed to be the longest, between the points of support, of any in the world.

Barnett's card, that "the Museum and Camera Obscura are *truly* the *most* interesting of all." I join, however, in their hope "that no American will leave without *calling* here, and spending a day at least on British soil."

My dry detail of the principal objects which engaged our attention during eight hours, will easily satisfy you that in common, no doubt, with ninety-nine in a hundred of those who have visited the falls of Niagara, this day was indelibly fixed in my memory. Nor must I omit to say, that as an Englishman, I felt an undeniable, though not a generous pride, in seeing that the Great Horse-shoe, on the British or Canadian side, was by far the finest of the two falls.

Before leaving the falls, I must tell you, that as soon as we got, as Mr. and Mrs. Stephen B— and Company say, "on British soil," I led *my* company to the hotel which at once greeted our view; and there all my distinguished Mexican friends joined heartily in drinking the first bumper of champagne to the health of Queen Victoria.

We got to Buffalo at dusk, and prepared to leave it before day-break next morning. We were desired to be at the terminus at five A.M.; and if

I was made to stare by the aristocratic temperance of "Phelp's House," I was no less confounded by the democratic display of voracity which we witnessed at the railway eating-house. Twenty minutes before we started "breakfast" was announced, and we were hurried by a great crowd of passengers into a long room, where a *table d'hôte*, reaching from one end to the other, was covered, not with a breakfast such as one could eat at five A.M., but with a perfect load of viands, hot and cold, boiled, roasted, and fried. It began to disappear with amazing velocity, and was finished by the time that our own party had drunk a cup of coffee, seasoned with a little dry toast. It was all we could manage at six hours before the breakfast hour of Mexico.

We started at half-past five, and passing through Attica, we got to Rochester at half-past eight o'clock. Here the doors were thrown open, and the porters bawled out, "*Dinner* on the table!" *Dinner* at half-past eight in the morning, instead of half-past eight in the evening! Calculating that if they dined at that hour they would sup at noon, or so, I told them we should wait for supper. "Then," said the porter, "you must

wait till you arrive at Albany at seven o'clock." So we were fain to dine at half-past eight, A.M.; though I must here remark, that the breakfast and dinner on this railway were the only extravagant derelictions from eating and drinking conventionalities to which we were subjected during all our sojourn in the States.

Rochester is but seven miles from Lake Ontario, and is beautifully situated on both sides the Genesee river, while passing also through the city, is the Erie Canal, over which is thrown an aqueduct, on eleven arches, 804 feet in length.

Our next principal point was Canandaigua, situated at the north end of the lake of that name. Then came Geneva, at the north-west corner of Seneca lake, the finest of those of Western New York. We then arrived at Cayuga lake, the tail of which we crossed on a bridge a mile and a half long, while another celebrated bridge, farther up, serves for the highway traffic. From both a fine view of the expanse of water is obtained. On we went, and got to Auburn, "loveliest village of the plain," which lies on the outlet, two and a half miles from Owasco lake; and here is the celebrated state-prison, conducted on the

system of labour and silence. It is of great size, and surrounded by a quadrangular wall 2,000 feet in extent. There is still another lake, Skaneateles, which we passed at five miles' distance; and then we stopped at Syracuse (to let down and take up as usual), a place famous for its manufacture of salt: thence, through Rome (!) we got to the handsome city of Utica, on the Mohawk river, fifteen miles from which are the Trenton Falls, six in number. Through a variety of other places, travelling all the way by the banks of the Mohawk, we came at last to Schenectady, one of the oldest places of the Union; and here the railway leaving the river, took a direct cut to Albany, where we arrived about six in the evening. The whole distance is 325 miles; so we only accomplished about fourteen miles per hour—a slow pace for those who have travelled from London to Exeter in four hours and a half. Yet, in spite of this difference in speed, it may safely be averred, that the railroads established and working throughout the immense territories of the United States, traversing vast forests, and conquering every obstacle presented by nature, afford as ample a proof of the energy, spirit, and

capacity of the Americans, as can be claimed by ourselves on our greatly reduced scale, and with the unbounded capital we have always at command. The whole line of railway between Buffalo and Albany is highly interesting and exciting to one who, for the first time, passes rapidly through the diversified scenes which at every turn meet and surprise him. I was kindly permitted to take my stand on the front gangway of the train, and thus had an excellent opportunity of seeing everything. The denseness of the forests, and the *newness* of the towns and villages, were what struck me most forcibly. "There," the guard would say to me as we dashed through the centre street of a village, "there is a place of about 2,000 inhabitants, which was begun the year before last." The woodland and river scenery is pretty, but of course without any grandeur. The lakes are very fine; and altogether a week could be most agreeably spent between the Niagara Falls and the Hudson.

The first thing we did on our arrival at our hotel, at seven, P.M., as you may imagine, was to order supper. That was warm and comfortable—the night was excessively cold; so we all made an

early retreat to bed, to rise refreshed for our departure in the morning.

Albany, as all the world knows, is a fine city, beautifully situated on the river; and the Hudson is the glory of the United States. I can do no justice to it here, and, therefore, must refer you to the many chronicles which exist of all its beauties and of all its grandeur. It affords, perhaps, the most perfect river scenery in the world.

We started at seven, A.M., by the "New World" steamer. The hotel-keeper asked me by what boat we were going. I answered, by the "New World." "Well, sir," said he, "the 'New World' is the finest boat in the States, and, therefore, I calculate, the finest boat in the world." My calculation is exactly the same. In sailing qualities, appointments, size, and sumptuous fittings, I do not believe the boat has a rival. The distance between Albany and New York is 145 miles; we cleared the former port at half-past seven, and at the rate of nearly twenty knots an hour, we steamed through a constant succession of new and wonderful scenes, which rivetted our attention throughout. At four, P.M., we were

in comfortable quarters in the Irving House. We had completed our tour of 3,000 miles, from New Orleans to New York, in sixteen days.

My letters of introduction were to Messrs. Goodhue and Co.; and, beside our esteemed fellow-traveller, Don José Garay, well acquainted with New York, some of my oldest and most intimate South American friends resided there. In particular, Mr. John C. Zimmermann, Consul for the Netherlands; General Alvear, the Argentine Minister Plenipotentiary; and Mr. Frederick Desbrosses. Don José Martinez del Rio, whom we had left at New Orleans, we also found here.

With the assistance of all these gentlemen, we saw in six days most of the wonders of the great mercantile Metropolis of the Western Hemisphere; and I cannot refrain from expressing my sense of the obligation which they laid me under during my stay, with the difficult task I had on hand of conducting such a party as that which I headed. I had also the advantage of making the acquaintance of Mr. Bunch, British Vice Consul at New York.

Of the "sights" of that city I shall say nothing save of one—at that time of very deep interest.

On Tuesday, the 20th, Mr. Gray, partner in Messrs. Goodhue and Co.'s house, took all our party to see and inspect the "Pacific" steamer, the first of Mr. Collins' line sent to sea, and then only in process of fitting up for her first voyage. Mr. Collins himself was on board to receive us, and with the greatest politeness and care, he shewed us over and explained every part of the splendid vessel. We all, and our Mexican friends in particular, viewed its details with admiration and astonishment. That is just three years ago; and now "Collins' line" is one of our "houschold words."

Having determined, before leaving Mexico, to visit Washington, with a view to seeing Mr. Clayton, Secretary of State, and Mr. Crampton, Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires (now, most worthily, Her Majesty's Minister), in reference to my Convention; I left New York on the 21st November, with Mr. Sierra, attached to the Mexican Mission, at Washington, and proceeding to that city under my charge. H— said she would prefer remaining with our friends at New York. But ere I got to Philadelphia, I much regretted having assented to her staying behind, and therefore sent back a telegraphic message from that interesting

town, requesting her at once to join me there. At noon next day she arrived, under charge of our friend Desbrosses, and we spent a most delightful day viewing the beautiful and interesting capital of Pennsylvania and its environs.

On Friday, the 23rd, we proceeded to Baltimore, where we spent three hours; and at half-past seven we arrived at Washington.

My first visit was to his excellency, Mr. Rosa, Mexican Minister, to whom I made over my charge, Mr. Sierra, and with whom I had a long and friendly interview.

I had a letter from Don Manuel Escandon for his old friend Don A. Calderon de la Barca, Minister from the Court of Madrid to the United States Government, with whose name, as well as that of Madame, all the world is so well acquainted, and which had been long familiar to myself through mutual friends. My next visit was to Mr. Calderon. Madame was not at home, but I found the amiable and highly gifted diplomatist exactly what I had expected. There is, among the highest class of Spaniards, a genuine and unostentatious frankness, an easy unpretending manner, which constitute a charm in

your intercourse with them, all the more refreshing that, in this world of conventionalities and of "outward shows and forms," it so seldom crosses the beaten path of life.

Mr. Calderon at once addressed me as an old friend, and told me he had of course heard of all our adventures. He hoped we would stay a few days among them—asked me to bring H— to dinner that day, as they had a little party; and he expressed his regret that we had just missed a presentation (or levée), as there had been one the day before, when we might have seen all the notabilities. I told Mr. Calderon that an old friend was dining with me that day; but that I had called expressly to ask Madame and himself to allow us to spend the evening (Saturday) with them, as we were under the absolute necessity of returning to New York on Monday morning. "We may *then*, Mr. Calderon," I added, half joking, "perhaps see some of the notabilities." "Muy bien — muy bien," said the Minister; "but come early—come and take your wine with us, while your daughter makes the acquaintance of Madame."

I next proceeded to call on Mr. Crampton, who

received me with the affability for which he is distinguished. When he heard how I was pressed for time, he took some trouble to procure me an interview with Mr. Clayton. We spent the better part of an hour with the State Secretary. He gave Mr. Crampton and myself every assurance that he would willingly lend his assistance in giving all the practical effect which the United States Executive could legally extend to the Mexican Bondholders, when my ratified Convention should come before it; and that he should at all times be happy to have Mr. Crampton's suggestions on the subject, with a view to carrying them out if possible.

This matter satisfactorily discussed, Mr. Clayton threw himself back in his large easy chair, which he amply filled, and began to discuss, in the freest terms, the relative position of the United States in Mexico, in the first place, and the inevitable dominion and progress, *per fas aut nefas*, of the Anglo-Saxon race. I retired strengthened in my conviction, that *l'idée fixe* in the bosom of every citizen of the United States is—the Old World for England—the New World for her descendants.

Finding I should meet Mr. Crampton again in

the evening, I hurried to overtake H—, who was to set out at noon to see the lions, accompanied by an old friend whom I unexpectedly found at our hotel, Mr. Parrot, the American Consul at Mazatlan. "We met accidentally," said he to H—, "five years ago in London—then in Mexico —now at Washington — and next, I suppose, it will be in Paris."

I overtook them at the Capitol: a magnificent building, on a magnificent site, for "Capitol Hill" commands the country round, both far and near. You know the incompleteness of Washington as a capital; so we finished our tour and saw everything before the close of the day.

Mr. Parrot dined with us; and in the evening we proceeded to the residence of His Excellency, M. Calderon de la Barca. We were not only received in the kindest manner both by the Minister and Madame, but the latter told H— that they had been endeavouring to get together, on so short a notice, as many of their friends as they could. Indeed, ere we left, there was quite a brilliant assemblage, including the Russian Chargé d'Affaires (a person of fascinating manners), and other members of the Corps Diplomatique; and presided over by

the accomplished and talented Madame Calderon, you may imagine how agreeably the evening passed. Madame, I am proud to say, is a country-woman of my own, and belongs to one of our old Scotch families.

Mr. Crampton invited us to his pew for the following day (Sunday), where, he told us, we should have an opportunity of seeing the President and his family. We went accordingly, and in a pew only two removed behind us, there, as a plain citizen, sat Zachary Taylor. He carried not with him the slightest outward indication of his being the chief magistrate and ruler of one of the most powerful nations on the face of the globe. Here was no "Prince President," surrounded by glitter, and show, and pomp. General Taylor simply made one of the congregation, undistinguishable and unremarked. There was something grander in this than in mere regal display, in so far as solid power without show, impresses the mind much more strongly than show without solid power.

Nothing could well be more original than the personal appearance of the late President of the United States, to whom his countrymen gave the

soubriquet of, "rough and ready." He was dressed in a suit of plain clothes; his blue coat of anything but the last Bond-street cut. The weather being cold, he wore coloured worsted gloves, which were something too long. His straight hair fell smoothly on his forehead; while his face, browned under many a sun—his temples furrowed with many a thought, gave token of the deeds he had performed, and of the anxieties he had suffered in his country's cause. He had a pleasing expression in his eye; and now humbly standing in the presence of his Maker, surrounded by his fellow-citizens, all within seemed tranquil and serene. There was not the slightest approach to aristocratic bearing about the man: quite the reverse. I could have fancied I was in the parish church of Deal, contemplating the figure of some bold, tried and weather-beaten pilot, scrupulously dressed in his Sunday suit, donned for the decent performance of the solemn ordinances of the day.

After service, we had a pleasant and pretty drive to George-town, two or three miles from Washington. Then we had farewell calls from M. Calderon de la Barca and Mr. Parrott, and starting at five P.M., we retraced our steps to New York, where we arrived next day at two P.M.

We had all our old friends about us on Monday; several of them dining with us, and in the evening we went to a pleasant *tertulia*, which Mrs. Zimmermann got up for us, and where we had an opportunity of seeing many of the New York belles. They were all very ladylike in their manners, lively in conversation, and (including our hostess's fair daughters) some very pretty. I also met that evening with good specimens of the American gentleman; and pleased with all we had seen, we retired, at a late hour, to prepare for our departure on the following day.

But, before I leave the United States, I am desirous of saying something of the impressions left on my mind, after a sojourn of a month and a day (in the States a day is something), in that colossal confederacy. It will be said that a month is much too short a time to study a nation's character, and to be able to arrive at just and correct conclusions. That would be true, were we speaking of any great independent State, differing from England in language, manners, customs, institutions, — everything. Instead of that, however, the United States is but a modification of Great Britain, and a month to

an English observer there, is worth a year to him at Constantinople or Saint Petersburgh.

The great difficulty we have to contend with, on a first visit to the United States is that, generally speaking, we go there full of false views, erroneous information, and multitudinous prejudices, all the stronger that they turn on the minor differences of character existing between the American and the Englishman. Admitting that I was one of the many in this case, I am certainly well pleased that I went to judge of the Americans by my own personal observation.

In coming to a right conclusion on the manners and habits of the people of the United States, a very great deal depends on *how* you travel through the country, and on the opportunities you have of seeing all classes. We have over and over again had accounts from travellers, of a class which may be denominated that of the *fast men* of the States; and they have been held up to us as a fair specimen of American society at large. You might as well travel over England, and at all the towns restrict your intercourse to what is found in second-rate hotels, and called the "Commercial Room," appropriated to travellers for

commercial houses; and then assert that the very amusing, but not very highly polished society which you there meet, is an epitome of English Society at large.

It is a mere vulgarism thus to judge of American customs; but yet one so generally spread abroad, that it will scarcely be credited when I say, that in traversing the states with my party, from one end to the other, we never, except in railway trains*—where, as there is but *one class*, the society is of a *very* mixed kind—were once hurried at our meals; never saw heels over the backs of chairs—were never offended by expectoration—were not astonished by nasal pronunciation—had no impertinent and long sets of queries put to us: in short, I shall be "pooh-poohed," when I say that with few exceptions, we found society in the United States, its habits and its customs, pretty much assimilated to those of England.

It is said that the Americans are a vain-glorious, and boasting people, when speaking of their ow country, and that they are insufferably tiresome on this prolific theme. Well, that is more or less

* As illustrated in our five A.M. breakfast, and nine A.M. dinner on the Buffalo and Albany Railway.

true, according to the class of Americans with whom you converse. Among the best informed and best educated of the commercial community—among men of property and of standing—men of letters—and among all those generally, moving in respectable and upper ranks, I do not think you will find this over-weening vanity thrust upon your notice. We too are proud of our position, our country and our institutions, and I should like to know if John Bull is very modest, among the nations of the Continent, in asserting his own superiority, and in expressing his contempt for everything which is not English.

As a test of the difference of civilisation in England and America, I may be told to look at our House of Commons, and at their House of Representatives. As our members are said to be the quintessence of the English gentleman, so we ought to take theirs as the most favourable representation of the Americans. And then the proceedings of the Lower House of Congress are pointed to as shewing the great inferiority of the staple.

But look at the constitution of our House of Commons and that of the House of Representa-

tives. Look at the innumerable new, distant, and scarcely civilised States sending to the great national assembly men elected by universal suffrage. Consider that their House is of but seventy years' standing, and ours of ages. Consider that the members are sent up, in the majority of instances, by rough Republicans, and are not the nominees of princely houses, or of venal coteries. There is no point of comparison.

There is but one degrading—but alas! *how* degrading—a characteristic in the national character of the American, which seems to place a gulf between him and rapid civilisation. I need not say that I allude to *slavery*, legalised by the nation, and held with the grasp of death by one-half of the States. Till this foul blot disappears, the United States will in vain strive to assert for her people at large, a civilization equal to that of Great Britain, or any other country where slavery is repudiated and loathed.

Many of my readers will be shocked to hear me say, that, in my opinion, a great countervailing benefit which the United States enjoy, is that of having no national Church. In saying this, I do not mean to attack, directly or indirectly, our

own. I belong to it. But I say, that if England were to be re-constituted to-morrow, our Church would not be re-constituted as it exists now. If so, the Americans did right to have no national Church. There you have none of the *Odium Theologicum* which tears and distracts Great Britain and Ireland. There you have no Popish aggression to fear, no hierarchical schemes to denounce. There you have no pampered pluralists to provoke satire and scandal—no half-famished curates to draw forth a sigh. There you have not a Protestant hated by a Roman Catholic population. There you have *toleration* as a word unknown, and *freedom* of religion as the substitute.

But if you have none of our church grievances in America, I can fearlessly assert from a pretty close examination, that there, in the more enlightened of the States, you have *at least* as much true religion as we have at home. I am almost tempted to believe, although I really hope I am wrong, that, with fewer pretensions, the Americans have almost more religious sincerity than ourselves.

The Americans, it is allowed on all hands, have

all the enterprise and industry, with a large share of the mechanical genius, literary attainments, and noble aspirations, of the stock from which they sprung. Their sagacity and quicksightedness are proverbial. Their social qualities are of a high order; and, from the nature of their country, they outstrip us in hospitality. Their love of country and ambition are both unbounded: but when I have reproached some of them for the unscrupulous means they have used in carrying out their plans of spoliation, I have invariably been answered with the *Tu quoque*, "What have *you* done in India?" And there we must leave the matter to rest.

I must not proceed any further; but with these reformed views on the subjects at which I have glanced, and on others which have equally disabused my mind, you will not wonder that I now say to all who would argue with me on the United States—first *visit* the United States, and then let us talk about them.

LETTER LVI.

THE MACDOUGALLS AND THE MACLEODS.

On the 28th of November, accompanied by our Mexican friends, as our fellow-passengers, and by others who desired to see us embark, we went on board the Cunard Line steam-ship, *America*, commanded by the well-known, and no less respected Captain Judkins. We had a good run to Halifax, where we arrived at about ten on the night of the 30th.

Here the packet merely stops for mails and passengers, but the mail agent, Lieut. Biddock, R.N., acceded to my desire of going on shore with him, accompanied by Don Joaquin Sayago, who was also anxious to have a peep at Halifax. The cold was intense. We drove in a small mail carriage to the Post-office, and there leaving Mr. Biddock and the bags, Mr. S— and I proceeded, in the

mail cart, to make a moonlight inspection of the streets and public buildings of Halifax.

Although well wrapped up—Mr. Sayago in a splendid Leopard-striped *poncho*, and I in my great coat—we felt the cold much, and Mr. Sayago looked out wistfully for some place where a glass of hot brandy and water and a segar might be procured. Every house of entertainment, however, was shut up; but at last, the driver seeing our difficulty, said there was a meeting of some kind that night at one of the public halls, and there we drove. We found the building lit up, and great doings going forward within. The front door was opened to us, and in the hall we found ourselves in the midst of butlers, servants, bottles, and bustle. "You cannot be admitted here, sir," said some one to me; "it is a subscribers' public dinner." "And what is the occasion?" said I. "Saint Andrew's day—the 30th of November."

We had no time to lose. My informant and I soon understood each other, and accompanied by M. Sayago, I went into the banquet-room, which contained a company of about 120 persons. The "*croupier*," or vice-chairman, being near to the

door at which we entered, I quietly sat myself down, a little behind, but close to him. He looked at me somewhat suspiciously: but I told him that I was a Scotchman; had just landed from the packet with my friend; that we had found our way there; that I had attended many a St. Andrew's day's dinner; and that I was sure he would allow us the pleasure of drinking a glass of wine at a board so congenial with my feelings.

The Vice-Chairman's face glowed with Scottish hospitality. "What will you take? Claret? Champagne? What will you have—Port? Come, Sir! I am most happy to pledge you and your friend in a bumper!" So, M. Sayago, who stood with his *serape* thrown gracefully over his shoulder, admiring the scene before him, and himself attracting no small degree of attention, responded with me in a glass of good old port.

In this state of affairs the Chairman, who was also, I think, Mayor of Halifax, called for a bumper. "Gentlemen," he said, "we have unexpectedly been honoured by a visit from two gentlemen just landed from the packet from New York. One a distinguished Mexican, the other a countryman of our own." Then, after some happy

remarks on the occasion of our visit, and personal compliments, the Chairman concluded by requesting a bumper to the health of M. Sayago and myself.

Great and unfeigned was the surprise of my friend, in finding himself thus prominently and suddenly brought forward in an assemblage of all the notables of Halifax, whom he had so little dreamt of seeing or knowing that night; and still more was he surprised, when he heard the loud applause with which his name was received. He gave me a look, however, as much as to say, "You must carry out what you have begun." So I stood up and returned thanks for M. Sayago and myself. I told the Chairman that I had, on more than one occasion, presided over a Saint Andrew's day's dinner in foreign and distant lands; and that, as I entered that splendid hall, I knew well the hearty welcome with which my friend and I would be greeted. But I added, that although I could dilate with pleasure on the gratifying sight before me, our time was short; and as I wished to volunteer a Scotch song, I could not indulge in a lengthy speech. What I said was

well received; and then I sang, "Get up an' bar the door."

Under the peculiar circumstances, my song produced no small excitement. The applause had scarcely subsided, when a gentleman laid hold of my arm, and in our own vernacular (of which on such occasions we make free and unreserved use), he said: "Come awa', Mr. Robeson, ye've been lang enough wi' the Vice-Chairman—the Chairman wants to shake hands wi' you."

M. Sayago and I, accordingly were transplanted to the upper seats, and amid many demonstrations of cordial feeling, we were seated on either side of the chairman. All was hilarity and good fellowship, in the midst of which we became oblivious of our steamer, our passage, our Admiralty Agent—and well it was that the latter did not forget *us*. The post-office mail-cart had gone back for him; and when I was preparing for a second song, in rushed Mr. B., whose energetic remonstrances with the chairman were drowned in vociferous plaudits. Down he was placed among us, *nolens volens*, and once more all went well.

"Duncan Gray" came off in grand style: one

or two short but pithy. speeches followed, and excitement was the order of the night.

Meantime, Captain Judkins, uneasy at the unwonted length of absence of the Admiralty Agent (not knowing the extent of a Saint Andrew's day's coercion in Halifax), left his vessel in search of us, and at half-past eleven he entered the banqueting hall, just as I was about to sing "Ae day a braw wooer cam doon the laug glen." The excitement rose with the new occasion (for Captain J. was an immense favourite in Halifax); so if we were received with a bumper, and the Admiralty Agent with applause, Captain Judkins was welcomed with hurras and clapping of hands. In a moment he was seized by four athletic Scotchmen, carried in triumph to the head of the table, and placed between the chairman and myself. All remonstrance for the moment was in vain. The song was sung—the bumpers were emptied—a more jovial sight never was seen.

But it was highly necessary to bring our visit to a close. Her Majesty's mail-bags, which generally wait for no man, had been detained nearly an hour extra, for midnight was approaching—and detained, I must say, *vi et armis*, in so

far as the gentlemen having them in charge were concerned. The leave-taking was something tremendous. I had such Scotch and Halifax grips from every man in the room, that my fingers were pretty well reduced to a jelly; but invitations to *return* to my Halifax friends were heartily tendered on every side, with a more especial one from the chairman.

When at last I came to my first-made friend, the vice-chairman, he seized me by both hands. We had all thrown away the Corinthian English for the Doric Scotch. "Noo, Mr. Robeson," said the warm-hearted croupier, "when ye get back to Halifax, ye'll find plenty o' freens, but nane sae glad to see ye as the Macdougalls and Macleods. Mind—ask for them. The chairman's a Macdougall—I'm a Macleod. Ask, I tell ye, for *them!* Dinna ye forget the Macdougalls or the Macleods." And I certainly never shall.

Our passage home was a most agreeable one, for among our fellow-passengers from New York we found some truly pleasant companions. A more gentlemanlike, a more attentive, or more friendly commander than Captain Judkins is

nowhere to be found; and his officers were of the same stamp as himself. We left exactly at midnight of the 30th; and, although a derangement of one of our engines not only stopped us for three hours on the 6th, but became unavailable during the rest of the passage, we arrived in the Mersey about daybreak on the 12th of December, after a run of thirteen days and some hours from New York, and of eleven days and six hours from Halifax.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

"*Convention concluded between his Excellency the Mexican Minister of Finance,* DON FRANCISCO DE ARRANGOIZ, *and the Agent of the Bondholders of the English Debt,* WILLIAM P. ROBERTSON, ESQ.

"1. From the 1st of July, 1849, till the same date in 1859, the interest of the said debt shall be 3½ per cent. instead of 5 per cent. per annum.

"2. In just compensation of this diminution, the Government gives up to the said Bondholders,—over and above the assignments of which they are actually in possession, and which consist of the export duty on specie at the Mexican ports of the Pacific,—of the fifth part of the duties paid at the custom-houses of Vera Cruz and Tampico de Tamaulipas,—and of the sum arising from the tobacco revenue, which is assigned to the Bondholders by the ninth article of the arrangements concluded with the creditors of that revenue on the 28th January of this year,—the circulation duties in the ports of the Pacific,

and the circulation and export duties upon specie at the ports of the Gulf of Mexico, in order that their amount, less the burdens with which they are actually encumbered, may be devoted to the payment of the dividends and the sinking fund of the foreign debt.

"3. To satisfy the arrears of interest at the rate of 3½ per cent. per annum, from the 1st of July, 1846, to the same date in 1849, 4,000,000 dollars shall be devoted from the American indemnity, to be taken proportionally in third parts from the portion not yet recovered, and without payment of fresh interest on the part of Mexico.

"4. Mexico shall make the payment mentioned in the preceding article at the favourable exchange of forty-six pence in the dollar.

"5. If the said four millions of dollars, at the above-mentioned exchange of forty-six pence, should not suffice to satisfy the amount of the interest at 3½ per cent. per annum, which has become due from the 1st of July, 1846, to the same date in 1849, the deficit shall be given up by the Bondholders in favour of Mexico.

"6. The permission to import raw cotton, which the Government gave to the creditors on the 19th July, 1847, to the amount of 680,000 dollars, in payment of the sums which belonged to them, and were abstracted from the maritime custom-houses of Vera Cruz and Tampico, remains definitively for account of the creditors, whatever may be the loss at which they may realise it.

"7. The difference of the interest from the 1st July, 1846, to the same date in 1859, at the rate of 1½ per cent. per annum, or altogether 19½ per cent., is ceded to Mexico *in toto*, and without ground for any future claim on the part of the Bondholders of the foreign debt.

"8. In compensation of this cession, the Government agrees to pay the Bondholders 500,000 dollars from the American indemnity, proportionally by third parts, in each of the portions which are still pending recovery, which sum of 500,000 dollars shall be devoted to the interest already become due and not paid.

"9. If in the period which elapses between the 1st of July, 1849, and the 1st of July, 1859, the dividends are not paid at the rate of 3½ per cent. on their becoming due, it shall be at the choice of the Bondholders to annul the present contract, and they shall re-assume their actual rights.

"10. On the 1st of January, 1859, the Government of Mexico and a Commissioner of the Bondholders shall make fresh arrangements for the payments of dividends posterior to the 1st July, 1859, more or less favourable, according to the state in which the Republic then happens to be.

"11. The present arrangement shall not cause to Mexico any expense for printing new bonds, or for any other outlay arising from commissions, brokerages, etc., which may have to take place in England with reference to the said arrangement.

"12. All the stipulations of the preceding articles are subject to the ratification and approbation of the Mexican ongress, and of the general meeting of Bondholders of the foreign debt.

"FRANCISCO DE ARRANGOIZ.
"WILLIAM P. ROBERTSON."

"Mexico, July 6, 1849."

Convention concluded by MR. ROBERTSON, *respecting the London Agency and Remittances.*

"Mexico, July 8, 1849,

"It being for the interest of Mexico, as well as for that of the Bondholders, that the remittances to England intended for the payment of dividends should not be applied to any other object, his Excellency the Minister of Finance, D. Francisco de Arrangoiz, and the agent of the Bondholders, William P. Robertson, Esq., have agreed on the following:—

"Art. 1. The agent of Mexico in London will keep the books referring to the debt, which he will receive from Messrs. Schneider and Co. Should these gentlemen make any difficulty in giving up the books and other papers, the agent of Mexico will open new books provisionally till the delivery of those existing shall take place.

"2. As the funds for the payment of dividends will be remitted to the Bank of England, they cannot be abstracted thence on any account but exclusively for the payment of dividends, which will be made by mutual agreement between the agent of the Republic and that of the Bondholders.

"3. The agents of the Bondholders in Mexico, when receiving funds on account of the debt, will give notice to the agent of the Republic in England, and to the agent of the Bondholders in the same country, by separate communications, of the sums which they send by every vessel, or of remittances in bills; and the agent of Mexico, as well as that of the Bondholders, will publish in two or three of the most widely circulated newspapers a notice of the sums which thus arrive, and the amount existing in the Bank at the date of the publication of the said notices.

"4. If by any accidental circumstance, at the end of six months the sums existing are not sufficient to pay a dividend corresponding to that of the preceding six months, the said amount can be divided *pro rata* at the request of the Committee of the Bondholders.

"5. The sums which the agents of the Bondholders residing in Mexico receive for the payment of the dividends, will remain at the risk and for account of the Bondholders from the moment their agents receive their money.

"6. The exact amount of each consignment, with

deduction of all expense of remittance to London, will be credited to Mexico. Mexico will have nothing to pay for commission for receiving the money, or any other expenses, but those occasioned by the agency of the Republic.

"7. The regulation of the agreement, which without opposing the literal sense of the present stipulations, shall be carried into effect by mutual consent of both agents.

"F. DE ARRANGOIZ.
"WILLIAM P. ROBERTSON."

In reference to the account I have given of the factory at Cocolapan (vol. ii. page 396), I have been lately favoured with the following letter from Messrs. James Grandison and Sons, already mentioned in the body of the work, and I think the information it contains will be, to many, an interesting addition to my slight detail.

"*Glasgow, 8th October*, 1852.

"WM. PARISH ROBERTSON, ESQ., LONDON.

"DEAR SIR,—We beg now to furnish you, so far as we are able, with answers to the queries you propose in your favour of 27th ult., regarding the factory at Cocolapan.

"It contains 15,000 spindles, which are driven by one

water wheel of 130 horse power, and another of 50, both made in Glasgow. There are from 12 to 18 foreigners (mostly Scotchmen) employed; but we are neither able to say how many operatives there are altogether, nor how many live on the premises.

"There are produced altogether, about 3,000 pieces of cloth, 30 yards each, per week, and we understand that the quantity is increasing, from the new improvements brought into operation. We do not know how much cotton is consumed.

"Our brother arrived here from Cocolapan in June 1850. He came to Liverpool through the United States, and left Liverpool in the *Orion* Steamer, which was wrecked off the coast of Portpatrick, he escaping with the loss of all his luggage. He was accompanied by a son of Francis Vallejo, Esq., who also escaped.

"While in Glasgow, our brother had made for him a number of self-acting headstocks, and also patent sizing or dressing machines, which have made a very great improvement in the quantity and quality of cloth produced.

"By the dressing machines, more especially, they have, at Cocolapan, been enabled to make more than double the produce of the looms, and they are kept up at only a fourth of the expense of the old machines. They also produce four times the amount of work more than the old machines.

"A number of scutching machines were also made, which have produced great improvements.

"The bulk of the old machinery is United States'; all the new was made in Glasgow by ourselves.

"Our brother left in November, 1850, by the West India Mail Steamer, and by the latest accounts we have from him, he is doing very well. Since he went home he has erected a mill for ginning cotton; and we have sent out to him also a number of agricultural instruments for the improvement of his farm. They have also commenced the cultivation of flax, and have taken a crop off the ground, from the appearance of which, they think it likely to succeed. We sent over to them a farmer from Ireland, acquainted with the cultivation of flax, and a supply of seed at the same time.

"If we can supply you with any other information you may wish, we shall be happy to do so,

And are, meantime,

"Yours truly,

"JAMES GRANDISON AND SONS."

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